THE TRIBUNAL OF CONSCIENCE

BY

FATHER GASPAR DRUZBICKI S.J.

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1 *Cor.* xi. 31

PREFACE.

Father Gaspar Druzbicki, the author of the work contained in this little volume, was one of the most distinguished members of the Society of Jesus in the seventeenth century. He was born in 1589, at Sieradz, in Poland, and entered the Society in August, 1609. His life was spent in a continual succession of active and laborious offices, and at the same time of great literary fertility. He was for some years Professor, then Master of Novices, and then Rector of various Colleges in Poland. He was twice Provincial Superior, and was present at Rome at the seventh and tenth General Congregations. He died a holy death at Posen in 1662, in his seventy-third year.

For some reason not mentioned in the short notice which is all that we can find of Father Druzbicki, he published himself only two of his very numerous works. A good many of them

seem to have been written in the Polish language, and were perhaps meant for his own use and for the use of the religious under his charge. The reader of the present volume will now and then be struck with expressions which show that this was the case with this particular work. The same, however, may be said of other spiritual books which are recognized as of immense general usefulness, such as those of Rodriguez and of Lancicius, to mention no others. The value attached to Father Druzbicki's writings, and the great reputation which he had acquired for sanctity, are sufficiently attested by the fact that it was thought well to print two large volumes of his ascetical works after his death. His life was written by Father Paulowski, himself an ascetical writer of much eminence. A good many of Father Druzbicki's works remain in manuscript—if, indeed, they are still in existence.

H. J. C.

111, Mount Street, W'
Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, 1884.

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FIRST METHOD.

THE GENERAL EXAMEN OF CONSCIENCE AS PRACTISED ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF ST. IGNATIUS, THE FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

I CANNOT begin in any other way than by placing here, before all others, as the first method of examining the conscience, that which was composed and has been handed down to us by the most holy Founder of the Society of Jesus—and this not only because it is the work of so great a man, but also because it is the basis and model of all the other methods which I shall have to set forth in this treatise, so that all that follow are in a certain sense developments of portions of it, or imitations of it. In the Book of the Spiritual Exercises,—approved by the Holy See in the Bull, *Pastoralis officii cura*, granted by Paul III. on July 31st, 1548,—St. Ignatius lays down two methods of examining the con-

science, one general, the other particular. The method of the General Examen—which I give in the Saint's own words—consists of five points:—

"*The First Point* is: To thank the Lord our God for the benefits we have received.

"*The Second Point* is: To earnestly ask grace to know and free ourselves from our sins.

"*The Third Point* is: To demand of our soul an account of the sins committed during the present day, searching through the several hours from the time when we rose, and first examining ourselves as to thought, then as to word and deed.

"*The Fourth Point* is: To ask pardon for our faults.

"*The Fifth Point* is: To propose amendment with the grace of God, and in conclusion to say the Lord's Prayer."

With regard to this exercise taught by St. Ignatius it is to be remarked that it is called the General Examen to distinguish it from the Particular, of which I shall have to speak below in the Second Method. The Particular Examen attacks one particular fault, the General is directed against all; the former deals with

a single vice, the latter with our vices in general; hence the names given to these two exercises. It is further to be noted that in the foregoing five points others are tacitly included which we should understand and practise. For instance, in the fourth point, in which we are to ask pardon for our offences, there is moreover included hatred of them, confusion for them in the sight of God, hearty sorrow, and so forth. And hence we may further note that in the General Examen of Conscience we may include and practise the following points:—1. To give thanks; 2. To ask light from God; 3. To examine into the sins we have committed by thought, word, deed and omission; 4. To investigate the occasions, sources and causes of them; 5. To conceive hatred of them; 6. To be filled with shame for them; 7. To grieve and be sorry for them from our hearts; 8. To earnestly resolve to amend and this in each particular; 9. To impose on ourselves some kind of punishment for them; 10. To ask pardon; 11. To take measures to avoid them; 12. To atone for them by repeated acts of the contrary virtues. If all these points in the Examen

were observed a little more carefully than is generally the case, no deep rooted or habitual vice could hold a place in our souls, and thus no path that leads to perfection would be difficult to us. Nay more, we should find none easier than that of the Examen.

We must moreover take notice that of all the points of the Examen, none is to be observed with greater care than that which includes the exciting ourselves to hatred, shame and sorrow for our sins, and making a purpose of amendment. For although all the points are useful and necessary, that which I have mentioned is the most useful and important of all, and the most efficacious for freeing and cleansing the soul from its vices and sins, so that, if it be well and carefully performed, it is impossible for any vice to remain in our hearts. What is the reason, or whence comes it, that we who so often examine ourselves during the day, to whom the use of this Examen is so familiar, and who, in our own opinion, are by no means negligent with regard to it, are so long subject to vices which daily betray themselves in acts? Indeed the only reason is, that we give so little

care to the point to which I have referred, for if we paid more attention to it we should easily be able to entirely free ourselves from every vice. We may make the same remark with regard to Confession. When we are preparing to approach this sacrament, especially if we do so frequently, and generally (as I suppose) with only venial sins to confess, we merely endeavour to call to mind or to note down the faults of which we shall have to accuse ourselves in confession, and this done, we go almost at once to our confessor and make our confession, without first diligently and carefully exciting ourselves to hatred of each and all of our sins, to shame for them and to a purpose of amendment. Perhaps we simply repeat some act of contrition that is in common use. The result of this is, that immediately after confession we fall into the same faults and defects—the result is, I repeat, that we go through our work and our daily life with the very same imperfections that we have just confessed. This indeed would not be the case if we would but conceive that hatred and shame for our defects of which I have spoken, fixing our attention upon their

nature and on each in particular, and in the same way making a purpose of amendment. On this account it is my decided opinion and most earnest desire, that this point of the Examen, to which I have so often referred, should be highly esteemed by those who aspire to perfection and make use of the Examen of Conscience as a means for their advancement. If this were so, they would experience to its full extent the benefit of the Examen, and would make themselves more familiar with the practice of it than with that of any other exercise, having for its end, advancement in the spiritual life. And indeed no other exercise ought to be more familiar to us.

It is finally to be noticed, that of devout men, some make use of the General Examen once a day, others twice, others again more frequently, some making an Examen each hour, others after each action. All these practices are most worthy of praise, and should be followed by men who are desirous of advancing and trading with profit in spiritual things, each adopting that rule as to the frequency of the Examen which reason, devotion and the advice

of spiritual directors may dictate. Here I lay down nothing definite on this point, nor will I say anything regarding it but this,—that the Examen of Conscience is never made without fruit; however often one may make it, he will always derive profit from it. So often as this advantage is desired, the Examen of Conscience will be employed; and the more one wishes to derive fruit from it, the more carefully will one make it and the more will one accustom oneself to the practice of it.

SECOND METHOD.

THE PARTICULAR EXAMEN AND THE MATTERS TO BE ATTENDED TO IN THE PRACTICE OF IT.

§ I. To the foregoing method of the General Examen I annex that of the Particular Examen. This too I take from the teaching of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Founder of the Society of Jesus. On this kind of Examen he makes the following observations, first noting that it includes three times.

"The first time is that of the morning, when a man ought, as soon as he rises from sleep, to resolve to diligently guard himself with respect to some particular sin or fault, of which he desires to cure himself.

"The second time is after noon, when one must ask grace from God to remember the number of times in which he has fallen into that sin or particular fault, and to guard against it for the future. Then he makes his first examination requiring an account from his soul

with regard to the said sin or fault, going through all the hours of the day from the time of rising to that moment, asking himself how often he has committed it, and noting down the number of his falls. This being done he makes a fresh resolution to guard himself with greater diligence through the rest of the day.

"The third time is in the evening after supper, when a second examination is to be made, running through the hours that have passed from the first Examen till now, and in the same way as before counting and noting down the faults committed."

§ II. Our holy Father makes some further remarks upon this kind of Examen with a view to make its practice more easy and to gain benefit from it more quickly, whether it be directed to the rooting out of some sin or fault or the acquiring or perfecting of some virtue, by this system of making notes. The first is that as often as one has been guilty of a fault of that kind on which he makes his Examen, he should at once putting his hand to his breast grieve for his fall, and this may be done when others are present in such a way that they shall not take notice of it. The second, that

at night having counted up the number for the whole day he should see if there be any improvement from the first to the second Examen. The third, that he should in the same way compare each day with that which preceded it and see if there be any amendment. The fourth, that he should in the same way compare week with week.

§ III. To these observations made by our holy Father we may add the following remarks. Although much time need not be given to this Examen, it should never be made so briefly and hurriedly, that he who makes it does not satisfy those dictates of conscience and that spiritual necessity on account of which he practises it. Therefore a proper amount of time is to be assigned to it, without hurrying on to other matters which, if we consider, we shall see are generally of less importance than this. And moreover the chief part of the time should be devoted to exciting sorrow for and hatred of our fault and resolving not to commit it again.

§ IV. The matter of the Particular Examen may be not only sins and faults, but also virtues and acts of virtue. For as we are not only to

avoid doing evil and performing our actions badly, but must also do good deeds and do them well, so we can and ought to make our Particular Examens not only as to whether and how often we have done ill, but also as to whether and how often we have performed acts of virtue and devotion. In this way just as we in a certain sense forget to commit our faults by gradually losing the habit of them, so on the other by repeatedly performing virtuous actions we become accustomed to them and make them as it were a part of our nature. Indeed the perfect rooting out of a vice consists in our being no longer capable of committing it, and the perfect acquisition of a virtue, on the other hand, consists in its acts being among those which have become natural to us. Therefore just as we make the Examen upon sins and faults in order that we may not commit them, so we ought to apply it to virtues that we may not neglect them.

§ V. When the object of our Particular Examen is to root out a vice, that we may the more easily attain our end we must not take for the subject of it that vice in general, or even this or that form of it, but as far as

possible particular cases. For instance, talkativeness in such a place, with such a person, at such a time, in such an affair, on such an occasion. In the same way we may take impatience, shown in a certain way, towards this or that person, on such an occasion, in such a place, at such a time. Or, again, we may examine ourselves as to pride in some particular form, and having regard to the occasion, place, time, business, person, and so on. This must also be kept in sight and practised when we are exercising ourselves in some virtue, we must not take for our Particular Examen that virtue as a whole or some great branch of it, as for instance love of God or love of our neighbour, or obedience or humility. But we must select certain acts of these virtues and assign them to certain occasions, times, places and employments, or resolve to observe them in regard to certain persons, as the case may be. For when the matter of the Examen is too general, there is not much fruit to be derived from it, and even that is slowly acquired. But when the matter is something definite, the Examen is easy and soon tells. We should therefore select subjects not of the former but

of the latter kind, as indeed the very name and principle of the Particular Examen demand.

§ VI. That we may the more easily apply the Particular Examen to any fault, it is to be remarked that it is not sufficient to wait until perhaps an occasion of the fault occurs, and then to avoid it, to look only for these chance occasions of resisting it, or of examining if indeed we have fallen into it and how often. This waiting for opportunities to arise of themselves would make the labour of the Particular Examen unprofitable, tiresome, long and tedious to us. For it will often happen that the fault will not be committed, merely through want of opportunity, and thus time will be lost, the evil habit will remain latent in the mind, and not unfrequently (what is still worse) it will be regarded as conquered though it has not been moved from its stronghold or even weakened. He who makes the Examen, therefore ought not to wait until occasions arise for committing or avoiding a fault, but should —so to say—seek out occasions for fighting against it. For instance, let us suppose that a man finds that whenever he is reported to

his Superiors for any fault, he takes it ill, suspects this one or that of having spoken of him, complains and murmurs and gives way to bitter feelings, and wishes to overcome all this by the Particular Examen, and to bring himself to be meek and patient on such occasions. If he will listen to me and take my advice, he will not wait to do battle with this impatience and bitterness until perchance some one reports him to the Superior, but he will set apart a certain number of days or weeks, fixing at the same time when and how often in each day he is to strive against it until he has vanquished it, striving not because any occasion for it has actually occurred, but as he should do if the opportunity had arisen. And he may do so either by making a formal and explicit resolution to bear patiently with having his faults revealed in such or such a matter, in such a way, by such a person, to this or that superior, and so on: or by begging the help of God to endure such a trial in a fitting manner: or by taking pleasure in considering the advantage of having a fault reported to the Superior, and the merit of patience in such a case, or on the other hand

conceiving a hatred of impatience and the losses which result from it; or again by praying for and feeling a special love for those by whom it may be he has been reported; or by resolving to reveal his faults himself and of his own accord to the Superior, laying them open and accusing himself of them whenever he notices in himself any defect of sufficient importance.

Certainly impatience of this kind if thus attacked cannot long maintain itself in the soul. For, by repeatedly performing such acts, a man will acquire the habit of taking in good part that his faults should be made known, of easily bearing it, nay of desiring it. His mind will be prepared for and look forward to such things, the revelation of some fault and the pain it causes will not come upon him as a surprise, and thus the arrow that is seen coming will not strike so hard or wound so deeply.

Again, this rule that I have laid down for freeing ourselves from a fault, must also be followed in acquiring or implanting a virtue. A spiritual man should not wait until occasions for performing acts of the virtue in question

arise of themselves, for the result will in most cases be that he will perform few such acts and will very slowly or never acquire the virtue he desires. But he must seek for occasions, or picture them to himself, and in a certain way deal with them as if they were actually present, making good resolutions and eliciting definite acts of the will with regard to them, desiring them, and praying to God that he may have such opportunities. Thus before the occasion for exercising the virtue arises the mind will be prepared for it, and the soldier will learn in time of peace how to behave in the day of battle, which is a point of the utmost importance as regards progress in perfection.

Yet in this matter the science of spiritual things is in a worse position than all worldly arts and professions. For the student of any art trains himself privately and, as it were, in secret in the practical part of his pursuit, so that afterwards when the time comes to perform it openly he can do so by mere force of habit, easily, promptly, without hesitation and in an efficient and perfect manner. It is only students of the science of spirituality that are ignorant of, or neglect and despise this hidden

training in their profession, and, though they have had little or no previous exercise in private, flatter themselves that, when they have the opportunity, they will be able to elicit and perform perfect acts of solid virtue without serious exertion, and without experiencing any hesitation or difficulty or any resistance from the lower part of their nature and from contrary habits. They act in fact as if there were less difficulty in the pursuit of virtue than in the practice of any of the arts.

Thus when a man who does not know how to play the harp, wishes to learn, he spares no pain and labour in frequently practising and training his fingers, bending and extending them so that he may be able to move them over and place them on the strings rapidly yet not carelessly, and accurately without being slow. And yet in training the hand of one who is learning to play the harp there is no difficulty to be overcome except that the habit is still unformed, for there is not necessarily any contrary habit to be got rid of. But in acquiring a virtue, for instance, humility, not only have we to overcome

that difficulty which the soul feels in abasing and having a mean opinion of itself, but there is a further difficulty which arises from the habitual readiness with which we dwell upon high and proud thoughts of ourselves and the dissatisfaction with which we remark that others have a low opinion of us, and the reluctance with which we allow or lead them to think thus of us. Therefore in learning to play the harp, if one can overcome the want of a certain aptitude, which is a purely negative defect, all difficulty for the hand and fingers is at an end; but in learning humility we have at the same time to overcome both the tendency of the soul to rebel against and shrink from humiliation, and its readiness to turn of its own accord to an inordinate esteem of itself, a habit which it has acquired, and which is now fast rooted by long indulgence. Both these difficulties must be conquered, for if one be overcome and not the other, the virtue of humility will have but little hold on the soul. Nay, though in some particular matter both be driven from their positions, they may still hold their ground in another.

By what I have said we see with what earnestness we must practise ourselves in the acquisition of virtue, practising, I repeat, daily and many times a day, in retirement, in the privacy of our own hearts. Thus the soul being trained for it beforehand, will find itself prepared when it has an opportunity for exercising this or that virtue, whatever be the matter in question and the surrounding circumstances. And this end cannot be better attained than by the method of the Particular Examen, which I have just set forth, in which the spiritual athlete at certain times in each day performs a predetermined number of acts of a particular virtue—directing his Examen to the performance of the full number, and asking himself whether he has done them as often as he resolved? at the proper times? and if they are of such a kind and as perfect as he desired? or if he has failed in any of these points and from what cause?

§ VII. For the subject of the Particular Examen vices should be taken before virtues. And moreover more serious failings should be corrected before those of less importance, those that meet the eye before those that are

hidden, those that affect others before those that injure ourselves only. Though the method of action is different, the same order is to be observed when we aim at the acquisition of good habits. We are to practise ourselves first in those which will be to general advantage rather than in what is only of individual benefit. For example we should strive to acquire modesty in our outward actions, in the senses, gestures, voice, affability, kindness, external obedience; at the outset we shall be imperfect, then we shall approach perfection, and at length perform these acts perfectly.

§ VIII. One may make a single Particular Examen on one particular subject, or it may be manifold having several subjects, and this in various ways. For example we may at one and the same time take the rooting out of some vice and the gaining of the contrary virtue, eliciting, a certain number of times daily, acts of hatred of the vice and resolutions or definite acts of the virtue. Or we may take one, two or three virtues, either perfectly distinct from each other, as love of God, modesty, and obedience, or within the wide field of some great virtue we may take separate branches of

it, or in a single branch various kinds of acts, and at the same time make our Particular Examen separately upon all these matters. Though I would not easily allow this to beginners, and to those who have not sound judgment, learning and a certain ripeness in spiritual things, I certainly think it very useful for those who are making progress, who have already attained to some degree of virtue, and who do all their actions in a befitting manner. Indeed I think that there is hardly any spiritual man who is making much progress, who does not every day exercise himself in acts of more than one kind of virtue, and this not as the result of any formal purpose or resolution, but from their being called forth by the round of daily actions.

For example, one has chosen for the subject of his Particular Examen fraternal charity. Now there is no doubt that every day he prays to God not only once, but many times, for example, when he rises, when he makes his morning meditation, when he celebrates or hears Mass, when he says the Divine Office and the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, at grace, at the General Examens, at the

Angelus thrice a day, at the evening Litanies of the Saints. And on all these occasions he will (as certainly he ought) pray with attention and devotion, acknowledging the Divine presence, showing reverence, and having a general or a private intention. Now why should he not on the same days on which he makes his Particular Examen on fraternal charity, make another Particular Examen on his reverence to the Divine Majesty during the time of the aforesaid prayers, noting any defect into which he may have fallen? Or why should he not make another Examen on the order of his daily actions and the manner in which he is accustomed to perform them, asking himself if he has observed it throughout the day? For my part I can see no objection to this, and if those who are making progress can thus practise it with ease and without endangering its efficacy, much more do I assert that it is possible for those who have already attained some degree of perfection.

THIRD METHOD.

AN EXAMEN OF CONSCIENCE IN UNION WITH THE FIVE WOUNDS OF JESUS CHRIST.

Holy and devout men have thought out many excellent methods of making the Examen of Conscience, partly with a view to make clearer and easier this exercise on the necessity of which I cannot insist too much, partly to make it still more useful, though in itself it is of the greatest advantage. Of these methods I give here one of which the idea is to unite the points of the Examen to the Wounds of Christ. There are five points in the Examen, and this too is the number of the Wounds of Christ. In the first point of the Examen we thank God for His benefits to us; and the first Wound is made as it were a secure treasure in which we lay up all the favours conferred upon us. In the second point of the Examen light is asked to know the recesses of our heart and conscience, and we beg that the second Wound of

Christ may be as a brilliant sun pouring its rays upon and lighting up the darkness of our heart. In the third point we examine into our sins and faults, and make the third Wound as it were a mirror in which the soul beholds itself and all its words, deeds, thoughts and omissions, comparing their imperfection with the perfection of Jesus Christ, so that by the comparison the difference between His conduct and ours may be made more manifest. In the fourth part of the Examen our sins, and especially those we have just committed, are washed away by our contrition and detestation of them, and as this can only be done by the merits and Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, His fourth Wound is as a bath of contrition in which the heart is cleansed from all its iniquities. In the fifth point we make a purpose of amendment, proposing to ourselves the most unflinching constancy, and therefore we choose the fifth Wound of Christ as a firm rock and tower of refuge, to which the soul may flee for safety. By thus uniting our Examen to the Wounds of Jesus Christ we increase in the soul devotion to Jesus wounded for our salvation, we make the Examen more pleasing to

God, more efficacious in freeing us from our vices, more powerful in washing away the stains of sin, and at the same time we encourage and strengthen the soul to advance in perfection, moreover the Examen becomes sweet to us and the labour it entails a pleasure. It will therefore be well to here develope this method of making our Examen in union with the Wounds of our Lord.

1ST POINT.—*In union with the Wound of the Right Foot.*

May the most holy Wound of Thy Right Foot, O sweetest Jesus, be to me a treasury for the gifts of nature, of grace and of glory, which I have received and abused, or which I should have received of Thy bounty had I not made myself undeserving of them, and which I am yet to receive if I do not forfeit them by my own unworthiness,—in fine of all Thy benefits to me throughout the whole course of my life, that in this Thy Wound they may be kept safe for me, for it fares ill with them in my hands, as not knowing how to value them as I ought, I easily neglect, abuse, and lose them.

2ND POINT.—*In union with the Wound of the Left Foot.*

May the most holy Wound of Thy Left Foot, O sweetest Jesus, be to me a sun sending the rays of its light into my soul, that I may know:—(1) What Thou art: (2) What I am: (3) What Thou hast done for me: (4) What I owe to Thee: (5) What I am when Thou art with me, and what I am without Thee: and that I may explore all the recesses of my corrupt heart, and see all my sins, bewail them as I ought, and completely cleanse myself from them in the Precious Blood that flowed from this Thy Wound.

3RD POINT.—*In union with the Wound of the Left Hand.*

May the most holy Wound of Thy Left Hand, O sweetest Jesus, be to me as a mirror in which I may see and contemplate the number, the gravity, and the hideousness of my sins and faults. For this Wound was inflicted upon Thee for my sins, and I may therefore befittingly view them in it. Let me therefore see in this bright mirror all that I have done this day.

1. As to my *thoughts*—were they idle, vain, proud, impure, gluttonous, slothful, tepid, angry, too engrossing, over anxious, discontented, inconstant, full of human respect or dwelling upon worldly hopes and fears?

2. As to my *words*—were they proud, sarcastic, angry, violent, unrestrained, extravagant, ironical, unkind,—were they words of detraction, or of exaggerated praise, or words that were insulting, lying, of designedly doubtful meaning, deceitful, flattering, affected, idle, ridiculous, or adulatory?

3. As to my *actions*—were they done with no fixed intention or without a right intention, done to gain the favour of men, or in hope of some other advantage, or through the love of praise, or through fear, or for my own convenience? Were they done in the proper place, time, and manner, with reverent recollection of God's presence,—with fruit—after previous consideration and election—were they done according to the rule and accompanied by the usual practices of devotion? Or were they done from mere habit, carelessly and at haphazard, against or without regard to the will of God, of the Church and of Superiors, in

violation of the rule, the customs and order of community life, the duties of my office, or my good resolutions? Were they the cause of scandal to others, and remorse to my own conscience? Were they done languidly, and with weariness and distraction of mind?—in obedience to my own will and judgment?—or to the injury or neglect of fraternal charity? Finally, did I allow my mind to become too engrossed in them, losing a proper command and watchfulness over myself, or did I perform them in a hurry, giving to them too little time?

4. As to my *omissions*—were they the result of carelessness, thoughtlessness, of engrossing my mind with one thing, of want of control over my likings and dislikings? Were the causes of them slight and insufficient, or did they arise from not observing the proper order of time in my actions, although the things I have omitted both could and should have been done by me for the honour of God and the good of my neighbour, for my own merit and spiritual profit, and for the sake of good example, obedience, and the observance of the common rule?

5. Am I in any way responsible for the sins or faults of others?—by command, counsel, example, or influence, by conniving at them, or leading them to hope for my connivance, by protecting or taking part with them, or not preventing them, or by such negligence in an office intrusted to me that others would notice and experience, or be able to count upon my want of vigilance? Or have I by my own acts caused others to fail, by pressing too hardly on them, by censuring and blaming them, by not telling them what it was to their advantage to know, or by not giving my countenance or assistance, when I could, to work which with that aid could have been done, or done more conveniently and easily, or more perfectly and with greater advantage, but which through my inaction has been left undone or done badly?

As to the order of my duties during the day, and the pious practices which I should observe in the course of my various actions and occupations;—have I followed the order of the day hour by hour strictly, punctually, and with proper self-possession?—were all my actions performed at the right time, in the proper way, and with the concurrence of those qualities

which belong to all perfect acts, namely forethought, a prudent choice or election—including deliberation, conclusion, and definite resolution to act,—a right intention, attention of mind, diligence, earnestness, and perseverance or constancy? or had they moreover such special perfections as an entirely pure intention and heroic effort, the act being done in its highest form, and being accompanied by love of God for His own sake, and a sublime disregard of all reward? or that fervour which grows and grows in ever-increasing proportion, desiring as a worthy sacrifice to God, Who is most worthy of all honour, to offer our actions in the name and with the affection and energy of all creatures, and in union with the merits of Jesus Christ, of His most glorious Mother, and of all the saints?

4TH POINT.—*In union with the Wound of the Right Hand.*

May the most holy Wound of Thy Right Hand, O sweetest Jesus, be to me as a bath of contrition, that by its virtue, efficacy, and merits I may bewail and wash away all my sins of omission and commission as by which

I have offended (1) against Thee, (2) against my own soul, (3) against my superiors, my rule, my office, and common life, (4) against my equals, (5) against my inferiors. And I ask that even a single drop of the Most Sacred Blood that flowed from this Wound of Thy Right Hand may be mingled with my sorrowful tears, in Thy Divine Presence by my guardian angel, and that Thou, O most clement Lord, wilt deign to accept it, and to grant me to be cleansed from my sins by Thee, and to truly amend my life.

5TH POINT.—*In union with the Wound of the Sacred Heart.*

May the Wound of Thy Most Sacred Heart, O sweetest Jesus, be to me a refuge and a place of safety (1) from Thy wrath, (2) from all sins, especially mortal sin, (3) from the snares of the devil, the world, the flesh, and my own self-love, (4) from bodily ills, (5) from eternal damnation. May it also be to me an abyss for all my sins, that with heartfelt sorrow and hatred for them I may cast from me and plunge into it all my imperfections; and may I never take them back or revoke this my

abandonment of them. Do Thou only grant me, O sweetest Jesus, a single drop of the Blood that flowed from the Wound of Thy most loving Heart, as a pledge and earnest that all my sins have been pardoned by Thee for ever. Do Thou receive me into the inmost depths of Thy Sacred Heart, and keep me there, burning, cleansing, inflaming, setting on fire and purifying me, changing my nature to the likeness, goodwill and pleasure of Thy Heart, and annihilating in me all that is not Thine. Amen.

Those who find devotion in using the Rosary of the Five Wounds will perhaps like to use in connection with it the foregoing method of Examen; with a view to this I have noted five subdivisions in each of the five points, so that the entire number of divisions corresponds with that of the beads, on which the points may be performed.

FOURTH METHOD.

AN EXAMEN OF CONSCIENCE IN UNION WITH THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES, AND WITH REFERENCE TO HUMAN IMPERFECTIONS.

On the principle of the preceding method a somewhat similar system of examining the conscience may be framed, with reference to those Divine Perfections which shine forth in the supremely excellent nature of God, selecting such as have some relation to the various points of our Examen. Thus:

I. The act of Thanksgiving is to be made to God as the Beginning, the First Cause and Source, the Lord, Preserver and bountiful Giver of all things, and most worthy of all gratitude.

II. The Prayer for light is to be made to God the First, Eternal and Unchangeable Light, Truth and Wisdom, "Whose eyes are far brighter than the sun, beholding all the

ways of men and looking into the most hidden parts."*

III. The actual Examination and searching of the heart is to be made with reference to His Supreme Will and Sovereign Majesty Who is the Principle of Law and Right, judging all by His will—whether expressed or implied—by right reason and justice—in a word, striving to see all things as God sees them, in the light in which He views our conscience, and with that feeling which He has in reference to our acts—whether those of this day or all others.

IV. Our detestation, renunciation and Sorrow for our sins is to be made in union with that hatred which God bears to even the least sin out of the very nature and essence of His Goodness. In union moreover with the essential Purity of His Divinity in which there neither is nor can be the least stain. To these we may add the love He bears to and the complacency and delight He takes in all that is good, and we may further call to mind the abyss of His judgments and of His Divine mercies.

* Eccl. xxiii. 28

V. The Resolution of Amendment is to be made in union with the mercy and infinite perfection of God from which He always has sufficient, efficacious and ever abundant reason for pardoning us all our sins, and apart from which there is no reason why God should pardon us our wretched sinfulness. We may moreover unite it to the immutability of God, in virtue of which God wills now what He has willed from all eternity, praying that what we now resolve we may will for ever, efficaciously and unchangeably: finally relying upon the protection of God, for "he that dwelleth in it shall be as Mount Sion, he shall not be moved for ever.* He shall say to the Lord, Thou art my protector and my refuge." †

From all this it will be easy for each one to develope his own method. I would add to this exercise another suggestion which may be made the basis of a separate method, but which also, if added to that of which we have just spoken, will make the practice of it much more conducive to spiritual progress. And it is this;—that together with the preceding method of examining ourselves in union with

* Psalm cxxiv. 1. † Psalm xc. 2.

the attributes of God we should make use of a method based upon the consideration of the imperfections of man. For example, when one makes the act of thanksgiving let him do so in the character of a dependent, a debtor, a slave, because whatever he has is not entirely his but belongs to his Lord. In saying the prayer for light one may assume the character of a man blind from his birth, or involved in the darkness of midnight, on whom the light of intelligence has not shone and who must unceasingly cry out: "Send forth Thy light and Thy truth, they have conducted me, and brought me unto Thy holy hill and into Thy tabernacles."* In examining his conscience and giving an account of his life he may place himself in the position of an accused criminal, or of the prodigal son, or of the unjust steward denounced to his master. In making acts of hatred and sorrow for his sins let him look upon himself as another Lazarus covered with sores, or Job struck with a grievous ulcer, or one who is ill, and covered with filth, or of one bound in prison, or one that has wallowed like swine in the mire. When he makes his resolu-

* Psalm xlii. 3.

tion of amendment and asks for strength to resist temptations and avoid a relapse, he may liken himself to a sheep in the midst of wolves, or a bird amongst the snares, or a child that has been made an orphan, or an unarmed man amid his foes, or a shipwrecked sailor cast upon the waves amid storm and lightning. With these considerations he will throw himself upon the mercy of God, in order that clinging to Him he may be made one spirit with Him.

FIFTH METHOD.

A USEFUL WAY OF EXAMINING THE CONSCIENCE IN THE SIGHT AND PRESENCE OF GOD.

"Who will grant me that I might know and find Him, and come even to His throne. I would set judgment before Him and would fill my mouth with complaints, that I might know the words that He would answer me, and understand what He would say to Me."* These are the words of holy Job, by which he expresses his wish to be judged, or rather to judge himself, in this life, in order not to be judged in death or after death. So too St. Paul says: "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged;"† and again it is said, "Be judged before God and expect Him"‡—for assuredly He will absolve us since He will not judge the same thing twice, and therefore we can confidently say to Him with David: "I

* Job xxiii. 3—5. † 1 Cor. xi. 31. ‡ Job xxxv. 14.

have done judgment and justice, give me not up to them that slander me."* The knowledge and consideration of these things ought to convince us of the Goodness of God and of His readiness to forgive us. At the same time they ought to encourage us to judge ourselves and by self-examination, self-condemnation, confession and satisfaction to anticipate the time when we shall have to appear before God, rather than defer the examination of our life and deeds till God Himself sits in judgment on us, when our appointed time being spent so that no more is left to us for repentance and amendment, "He will search Jerusalem with lamps."† It will therefore be a most useful practice to examine and judge ourselves, and to place ourselves for this end in the sight and presence of God, in order that the soul may all the more seriously apply itself to the matter in hand. In doing this the following method may be adopted:

I. Invite God to enter into your heart, and beg of Him that He will order the Tribunal of His Majesty to be set up therein, and that, surrounded by all His Saints, He will deign

* Psalm cxviii. 121. † Sophon. i. 12.

to take part in your examination and judgment of yourself.

II. Fervently ask Him to give you light, using these or like words:—

"My Lord and my God, do Thou light up every recess and corner of my heart, grant me now to be examined with those lamps with which Thou wilt one day search Jerusalem and Babylon. Enlighten my understanding with their brightness, inflame my will with their fire, so that no sin may escape my notice, no imperfection be concealed from me, which the light of Thy Truth will not make known to me, the fire of Thy Charity burn away."

III. Then proceed to judge yourself after this manner. Enter into the judgment-hall of your heart, where God is now seated on His tribunal. There, in the presence of God and of His Saints, your memory will be the accuser, and will enumerate all your sins, your conscience will bear witness that you have committed them, your face will blush with shame, and like the Publican, or the Adulteress who was brought before Christ, your eyes will be fixed in confusion upon the

ground. Your reason will do the judge's office and condemn you to the punishment you have deserved, fear will be as your fetters, sorrow as the torturer and executioner to inflict pain and torment on the will, and tears, sobs, beating of the breast, sighs and bowing to the earth will take the place of the shedding of blood. Finally, an efficacious purpose of atoning for your sins and such actual satisfaction and penance as you may be able conveniently to practise, joined with a firm and serious resolution to amend, will serve as executioner of the sentence.

IV. All this being done with seriousness, diligence and strictness, as though before the eyes of God and His Saints, you should either offer to God the sentence you have passed upon yourself, or ask your Angel Guardian to offer it for you, or at least distinctly pronounce it with the voice of your heart, or even with that of your lips.

V. But at the same time beg for God's mercy, bring forward those motives and claims which may urge Him to spare and take pity upon you. For He Himself has said:—"Put me in remembrance and let us plead together;

tell if thou hast anything to justify thyself."* And thus should you pray:—

"O Lord my God, against Whom alone I have sinned, and to Thee alone do I confess all the iniquities I have committed and on account of which I have pronounced and do now pronounce judgment on myself. I implore Thy mercy, and beg that I may be justified by Thee. I know indeed, O Lord, that I can bring before Thee nothing of my own on account of which I might be justified in Thy sight before Whom no man living is of himself justified. Wherefore I do not strive to conceal my iniquities by excuses or palliations or subterfuges, but rather I lay them bare and open before Thy eyes, with all their accumulated malice and ingratitude, for my sin is far greater and more grievous even than I know. But nevertheless, O most merciful God, I also know that although I have so sinned that even I have more than sufficient reason to judge myself worthy of condemnation and Thou mightest most justly condemn me, Thou hast not lost that attribute in virtue of which Thou art wont most mercifully to save sinners. Nay I even know that the greater is my misery,

* Isaias xliii. 26.

the wider is the field for the action of Thy Goodness and Mercy. Therefore for the glory of Thy Holy Name, in which alone we can be saved, do Thou, O Lord, now and for ever forgive my sins. Bid me tell Thee, my God, if I have anything to show on account of which I may be justified. If Thou seekest something of my own, O Lord, I protest that I have nothing unless my own nothingness and wickedness, and a great and unpaid debt of punishment. But if Thou askest me if I have anything of Thine, I have indeed much of every kind. I have in the first place Thy whole Nature, Substance, and Dignity, Whose Nature is Goodness, Whose Substance is Clemency, Whose Life is Mercy, Whose Joy is our salvation. I have besides Thy very Heart, for I have Jesus Thy only-begotten Son; I have His Incarnation, Nativity, Life, Labours, Sufferings, Humiliations, Sorrows, Pains, and Burial. I have His Virtues, Graces, and Merits, and the ransom of His Precious Blood. I have the riches, prayers, intercessions and communion of all Thy Saints, as well of those still living upon earth as of those who are reigning with their God in their true

Fatherland, and I have the wealth of the whole Church, Thy most beloved Spouse. All these are sufficiently efficacious motives that Thou shouldst have mercy on me, who dost rejoice when Thou art doing good to us and when Thou canst forgive us. These indeed are sufficient reasons why Thou shouldst justify, sanctify, cleanse, and purify me, Who dost take delight and art glorified in our being just, holy, and perfect. Spare then, O Lord, Thy servant, for the sake of whom Thou didst not spare Thy Son. Accept in atonement the punishment which I Thy most worthless servant deserved, but which He Thy priceless Son endured and offered to Thee for me."

The most profitable results may be expected from this method if only it is used with sufficient frequency. For it seems hardly possible that in the soul of one accustomed thus in the sight of God to correct and seek amendment of his faults there should remain, I will not say any grievous sin, but even any slight imperfection. It remains then for us to make diligent use of this exercise for some little space of time, say for a fortnight or a month, and we shall know by experience what is the fruit of it.

SIXTH METHOD.

A METHOD OF EXAMINING THE CONSCIENCE IN THE FORM OF A CONFESSION TO GOD.

Place yourself in the presence of God your Judge as a criminal and a sinner, and, as Jeremias bids us, "set up a watch-tower"* and ascending it place before your eyes or rather before the eyes of God all the misery of your faults and imperfections, recounting to Him with King Ezechias all the years of your life,† all the hours of the day and all your daily acts in the bitterness of your soul, and making a confession of them to Him, with shame, sorrow, hearty detestation, and confusion of countenance, as far as possible passing over no thought, word, deed, omission or imperfection, but manifesting and most exactly confessing them all to God. And this not indeed that God may learn them from you, as if He did not already know them, but that you yourself may

* Jer. xxxi. 21. † Isaias xxxviii. 15.

know them and know them thoroughly, and that you may renounce and blush for them before God, and more efficaciously bewail them and amend. Say then with the Church:—"*Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*—Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. O Lord, my God, I confess against myself all my injustice,* which I Thy worthless and ungrateful servant have committed in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty. I do not attribute my faults O Lord to Thy will, nor to the temptations of the demon, nor to the concupiscence of the flesh which urged me on, nor to the world which took my senses from me, nor to the opportunity which presented itself, nor to the passion which seized upon me, nor to the bad example which led me on, nor to any want of Heavenly aid, as if indeed that had failed me. But I cast all the blame upon my own evil will, which gave its consent and acquiescence to my sloth, negligence, idleness, my weak indulgence of my senses and my own self-love, my avoidance of labour and effort. Through my own fault I have consented to those bad thoughts, through

* Ps. xxxi. 5.

my own fault I have spoken those idle, thoughtless or harsh words, through my own grievous fault I have done evil deeds, through my own fault I have omitted so many good works, I have abused Thy assistance, I have rejected so many graces and inspirations, neglected so many opportunities.

It is through my fault, O Lord, that I did not rise in proper time to-day, that I did not obey the signal as if it were Thy Divine Voice, that the first fruits of the day, my waking thoughts were neither of Thee nor offered to Thee but that I allowed them to be snatched away by the demon, that I performed carelessly those pious practices which I am wont to observe on rising, practices imposed by me upon myself at Thy inspiration, that I neglected some of them, put off others. It is my fault, O Lord, that while rising and dressing, I did not fix my thoughts on subjects proper to the time, I did not keep myself in Thy presence, I did not observe an angelical decorum and modesty in Thy sight, in the sight of my Guardian Angel, and in my own sight which is consecrated to Thee. It is my fault, O Lord, that I came to prayer unprepared or hurriedly prepared, that

I did not make the proper preludes, that I neither made the act of Thy Presence, nor humbled myself before Thee, nor came as it were hungering to prayer, that not only the beginning of the hour of meditation did not find me praying and already anticipating the signal for prayer, but that moreover I took something from the first moments of prayer by not commencing it at once with the others when the signal was given to begin, or by putting it off and doing something else in the meantime,—and so on. . . . All these faults I confess to Thee, my God, I blush and am sorry for them all, I hate them, and purpose to avoid them for the future; and not these only but those also which are hidden from me either through my forgetfulness though I should have taken note of them, or through the devil or my own judgment deceitfully concealing them under the cloak of virtue, or in fine through my slothfulness and carelessness as to my spiritual progress, and my continual negligence. Moreover I confess to Thee, O Lord, my God, those faults which though I now know them not or do not consider them as such, Thou hast marked and dost consider as

sins, and those I would have committed hadst not Thou prevented me, and which, did I know them, I would confess and renounce. All these do Thou O most gracious Father of mercies remit, that worthless and wretched as I am in my own eyes I may be cleansed and made pure in Thine."

This done you will excite yourself to a feeling of true and perfect contrition after the following or some similar manner:

"I have sinned, O my Father and my God, against Heaven and before Thee, against Thee only have I sinned and have done evil before Thee. I have sinned against Thee, my God, the Three in One; against Thee, the Eternal Father Who didst create me out of nothing; against Thee, the Son of God Who hast redeemed me with Thy Blood; against Thee, the Holy Ghost Who didst sanctify me in Baptism; against Thee, the Most Holy Trinity, Who hast stamped Thine Image upon me and chosen me for Thy dwelling place. I have sinned, O my God, against Thy infinite Goodness in which Thou hast spent Thyself in ever doing good to me; against Thy Charity by which Thou hast freely and of Thy own accord loved me;

against Thy Mercy by which Thou hast gratuitously forgiven me my sins; against Thy Omnipotence, by which Thou aidest me in all I do. I have sinned against all Thy Perfections, trampling them under foot in order to follow my own will. I have sinned against Thee, my God, my Father, my Master, my Shepherd, my King, my Protector, my Benefactor and all my Good. I have sinned against all the benefits which with the greatest love Thou hast conferred on me; and in the same way I have sinned against heaven which gives me its light, against the earth which bears me, against all Thy creatures which serve me, against Thy Angels who guard me, against my fellow-men who are partners in my merits, against my own body and soul created by Thee, my God, and given to me to use.

I have sinned against the light of reason and faith which I have rejected and cast aside, against Thy Grace which sustains and nourishes me, and whose action within me I have impeded or destroyed; against the gifts of the Holy Spirit which I have thrown away, against those virtues which I have stained or blotted out in my soul. Yet in all these I have sinned, my

God, against Thee alone, for all injuries to them are so many injuries and insults to Thee. Nor have I sinned only against Thee, but I have sinned in Thy sight O Lord, my God. I have sinned before Thy Wisdom which saw me in my sin; before Thy Love which spared me; before Thy Generosity which was enriching me; before Thy Omnipotence which gave me strength. How blind I was! why did I not think in Whose presence and against Whom I was sinning.

O my God, the Eternal God, most worthy of all praise, I am not worthy to be called Thy son. Nay! I am not worthy even of the name of man or of Thy creature, I am not worthy of this very being which I have received from Thee, and of which, as Thou art ever preserving me, Thou art ever making a fresh gift to me—for with all that is in me, with all my being, I have sinned in Thy sight and against Thee, Who hast given it all to me. O God most Worthy of all my service, rather than that I had ever offended Thee, or rather than that I should ever offend Thee henceforth by a single sin, better a thousand times that I had never existed, that I did not now exist. Spare

me, O Lord, spare me and pardon the evil that I have done in Thy sight and against Thee, that Thy infinite Goodness and mercy may shine forth in remitting such a weight, such a multitude of sins, and in freeing me from such great and manifold misery. And so may even I praise Thee for all eternity, and sing Thy mercies for ever."

To this method the same remark applies as to the preceding one, namely, that the more we use it, the more useful effects shall we experience from it. I think too it will be of advantage in order to lessen the labour of practising it, if we have either in our mind or before our eyes a little memorandum of all the hours and actions of the day. And moreover I consider it useful for the same end to have a memorandum of the rules and practices to be observed in the performance of our actions, for thus we shall more readily see not only what imperfection there is in each action, but also what is wanting to make it perfect, and we shall find it more easy to confess them to God and accuse ourselves before Him. Our resolutions of amendment too will be more efficacious when we deal with particulars, and put a distinct

purpose before us, than when we look at things in general and confusedly.

SEVENTH METHOD.

A METHOD OF EXAMINING THE CONSCIENCE BY BEGGING THAT GOD WILL POINT OUT TO US WHAT HE THINKS OF US AND OF OUR DEEDS.

St. Gregory the Great says:—"Often we make a better Examen of concience by prayer, than by scrutiny thereof."* The Holy Father's remark applies both to the methods which immediately follow and to that which I purpose here to set forth, and in which I proceed to lay down a means of examining the conscience in union with and by means of prayer. And this in the following manner:—

1. Let a man come before God and at least in mind and heart, keep himself in His presence, honouring Him with adoration and reverent worship and placing himself such as he is, entirely in His sight.

* *Moral.* cap. 17.

2. Let him ask of God true light, that enlightened by it he may know himself as God sees him, perceiving what he is, what is wanting to him, in what it is that he is displeasing in the eyes of God, &c.

3. Let him ask of God with all humility and devotion that He Himself would deign to make known to him what is His opinion and judgment of him. And this petition may be made in the following manner:—

"O God Who art the True Light, infinite Brightness, eternal Wisdom, Verity and Truth, Who canst neither deceive nor be deceived, Who art as a spotless Mirror, behold I stand in the most pure and most holy sight of Thy Majesty, and although Thy Wisdom already knows me perfectly and entirely, nevertheless on my own part and of my own free will I place myself before Thee, that all that I am may be entirely manifested to Thee. Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant,* enlighten me with the light of Thy Truth, and the Truth of Thy Brightness, that I may be enlightened as to myself and may know myself as I am known to Thee. Make known, I beseech Thee, O

* Ps. xxx. 17.

Lord my God, make known to me Thy servant, Thy suppliant, Thy bondsman and beast of burden, whatever there is in me that is displeasing to the bright eyes of Thy Majesty and Wisdom, in what I have this day been found wanting in Thy sight, in what I have offended against Thee and against Thy Will to which I am espoused? Make known to me, I beseech Thee all that has displeased Thee in my irascible and concupiscible faculties, and in all the higher part of my soul; in my passions and my powers, in all my senses both internal and external; in my limbs and all my members; in my actions whether voluntary or involuntary, done under obedience or by my own choice; in my resolutions and duties; in my labour and rest, in my sleep, in my conversation, in community life, in my conduct at home and abroad, in my plans, my deeds, in my employment, and in the way I fulfilled and executed it.

"Make known to me I beseech Thee, all that has displeased Thee in my actions and occupations whether ordinary or extraordinary—with regard to my rising, prayer, Mass, studies, eating and drinking, recreation, confessions, sermons, reading, Examens, conversations, in fine all

that I do. Make known to me, O Lord, I beseech Thee, all that has displeased Thee in my religious spirit, my pursuit of perfection and my interior state as regards my faith, hope, love of Thee and of my neighbour, poverty, purity, obedience, regularity in my daily life and in my observance of the rules of the community: in my zeal for penance and humiliation, my practice of patience and forgiveness of injuries; in the time and order of my daily actions, and as regards kindness, gentleness, sweetness and affability, gravity, modesty, seriousness, equanimity, desire and effort to advance, reverence and respect in dealing with Thee and in Thy presence?—As regards purity of intention, frequent renewal of it, habits of prayer, of having recourse to Thee, of turning back to Thee, and asking and begging of Thee what I need?—As regards my fidelity to Thee, my gratitude for Thy benefits, and whether I make good use of them, and if I resign myself wholly to Thy will under whatever form, appearance, conditions or circumstances as it may be manifested to me?—and so on as to other matters. . . .

"Make known to me I beseech Thee, O Lord

my God, my light, my guide, the source of my wisdom and knowledge, make known to me, I repeat, what Thou dost desire and ask of me, and in regard to me; what Thou dost wish to be done by me, in me, about me, through my instrumentality or against me for Thy sake and to please Thee; what Thou dost wish me to bear and to undergo. Make known to me I beseech Thee in what manner, with what fruit, to what end, in what circumstances Thou dost desire me to suffer or labour for Thee, and at the same time give me, O Lord, strength to do and to endure these things according to the good pleasure of Thy Will. Behold, O Lord, here I am, Thy servant, Thy bondsman, Thy beast of burden, I stand waiting in Thy presence and ask a sign of Thy will in my regard, I beseech Thy help, I beg for Thy guidance, and I purpose to give Thee the promptest and the most humble obedience."

This method may be used at our daily Examen, or during Mass, after Communion or before the Blessed Sacrament, after single actions, or after we have been for some space of time engaged in many distracting occupations, provided always that we take into con-

sideration the time, the nature of our act, our neighbours' convenience, and other circumstances, having regard to which this method in practice may and ought to be made longer or shorter as the case may be. I would give this caution too as to its use, (which should equally be observed in every other method of examining the conscience,) that he who practises it should not be in a hurry, but should go over each point slowly, and with deliberation, so that he may be able both to fix his eyes upon all his actions and know the nature of them, and to hear whatsoever answer the Divine Light and Truth may perchance deign to grant him.

EIGHTH METHOD.

A METHOD OF EXAMINING THE CONSCIENCE BY PICTURING TO OURSELVES AN EXAMINATION THEREOF MADE BY GOD.

The present method has this much in common with the last that in both a man endeavours to know himself as God sees and judges of him, the state of his soul, his failings, the progress he has made. But it differs from it in that in the former one strives to obtain this knowledge by asking for it, but in this exercise the soul makes no petition but the desired knowledge is presented to it. For the object of this method is that a man should obtain a knowledge of himself from God regarded as His Judge and as in some measure irritated against him, and so should more carefully consider and sift his position and the worth of his daily actions. Often indeed the fire of charity burns low within us; then is the time to stimulate ourselves with the chill of

fear, and as S. Bernard warns us, "words of love are for a little while to be put aside, and fear called forth and aroused that it may rouse up the soul that sleeps or is falling asleep."* Guided therefore by this advice let him who traffics in spiritual things act upon it, by means of this method.

1. He will imagine that like the servant who was deeply in debt to his Master, or the unjust steward denounced to his Lord, or the idle servant who wrapped his Master's talent in a napkin and hid it in the earth, he is summoned to give an account of his conduct to his King and Lord.

2. He will imagine that God bids him produce his account book, that is to say the record of his heart and conscience with all his works of the year, month, week or day.

3. He will mark how God most carefully reads the tablets of his heart and with the eyes of His eternal Truth and the lamps of His piercing Light searches out all his sins and errors. He will mark what account God makes of his rising, dressing, prayer, Mass, Divine Office, studies, work, in a word of all his

* Serm. *in Cant.*

actions. He will consider what answers he has to give to the questions God may put to him, for example—"Is it thus that such a work should be done according to the dictates of My Will, and of what is required by My Dignity, My Presence, My Love? or according to your own reason? your religious profession? your rules? the order of the common life? the example of Christ and of His Saints? your own knowledge and learning? is this what you would require from others? is this the fruit of so many graces and opportunities, so many good resolutions, so much merit? Can he answer God one for a thousand?*

Let him mark how in the sight of God, a Judge who is all truth and wisdom, there is little good and that but rarely in acts which in our sight and in that of men in general appear good and are considered as such. Let him mark what perfection He exacts and desires to see in every one of the acts I have named. Let him mark how nothing escapes the sight of God though it be never so small, never so much hidden from the eyes of men. Let him mark how all attempts at excuses, concealment, pleading or

* Job ix. 3.

opposition go for nothing and are of no avail to a man before God. Let him mark the difference between the judgments of men and those of God, and how true it is that no one knows how strictly, how severely, God will judge us. Let him mark with what good reason Job and David deprecated the judgment of God, and St. Paul declared:—"I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord."* Let him mark how before the eyes of God all his works melt away with all their perfections, all their diligence, earnestness, fervour, and much more all their slothfulness, negligence, tepidity, distractions, and listlessness.

He will also picture to himself in what manner with what countenance and with what looks God as his Judge regards each of his acts and looks upon him, how He weighs them and what value He assigns to them, with what actions and feelings God deals with and goes over his works, places them before the eyes of their author, and compares them with His own perfections, and the perfections required by His Will, His commands and His good pleasure,

* 1 Cor. iv. 4.

how He casts them from Him, and in the sight of the man who stands before Him rejects them, being full of wrath and contempt for them and how He withdraws His indignation, cursing him as He cursed the barren fig-tree on which He found no fruit, or menacing him as He threatened with the axe the tree that for three years had uselessly cumbered the ground, or upbraiding him like Corozain, Bethsaida, Capharnaum and Nazareth, or weeping over him as He did over Jerusalem? How He counts up to him talents bestowed upon him that with them he might labour and traffic to good purpose—that is to say the help of so many gifts both of nature and of grace; how He reproaches him with so many good examples given him by others, even by men in his own circumstances; how He alleges what is due to His Majesty, His Will, what He has deserved of us, His pleasure in our good, His hopes and expectations of us, the rewards He has assigned us, His promises, and also the punishments with which we are menaced; how He reproaches him with his own resolutions, and promises, and finally all his defects in intention and execution, not to speak of his

tepidity, inconstancy, ingratitude, and his little regard or esteem for God.

4. What then can he expect, or what other issue can he anticipate, except that God should look upon him in wrath and indignation and abandon him, and then sentence an imposition of punishment and chastisement and deliverance up to the executioner?

5. Having dwelt upon and considered these things exactly as if they were actually occurring and passing before him, let him himself proceed to deal with his own case. Let him in every way that he can beg God to turn away His justly angry countenance, confessing at the same time that he has deserved to suffer the severest chastisements. Like the servant who was in debt to his Lord, let him fall down before Him on his face and pray:—"Have mercy on me and forgive me all my sins. I resolve to do such or such a work more perfectly, finally I resolve to live more befittingly in the sight of God and to make good use of His graces."

6. In conclusion let him inflict some punishment upon himself, without however desiring to withdraw himself from such punishments as

God may see well to inflict, let man punish himself as he ought, and allow God to punish him as He sees good.

If this course of examination is used with the slightest diligence it is very efficacious, and nothing short of necessary to the slothful. To the fervent, whose fervour knows no intermission, it is perhaps not so needful, but to such as are liable to occasional or frequent fits of tepidity, its usefulness, and indeed necessity, cannot be exaggerated. This will be better understood by such as use the practice. Perhaps it will not always be well to run through all the actions of the day, but no one can fail to secure great benefit and spiritual improvement from considering first one and then another course of action. For he that goes in fear neglects nothing, nor can that man be without fear who daily calls to mind that he must stand before the judgment seat of God, and in fact submit himself to this Divine judgment, and in a manner learns by experience that the judgments of God are far different from the judgments of men," as said the Abbot Agatho, in the *Lives of the Fathers*, chapter ii. No. 2.

NINTH METHOD.

AN EXAMEN UPON FERVOUR AND A RENOVATION OF SPIRIT.

The First Point of this Examen will be to render thanks to the Divine Goodness for all the years of life that up to this time have been granted you in order that you may serve the Supreme Majesty of God, and you will consider that few men have received from God a life like to that in all its circumstances which you have enjoyed.

The Second Point will be to beg of God abundance of light that you may know in what manner you have hitherto spent your time, and how you are resolved to spend the remainder of your life, and especially the present day; more particularly as regards fervour in the service of God, to which it will help to ponder carefully what will be proposed in the Third Point.

The Third Point will be to consider the following questions:

1. Have you this day thoughtfully and deliberately renewed your general intention of serving God, and of doing and suffering all things for God with intense fervour, absolute purity, diligence in execution, and due attention to order?

2. As regards all duties imposed upon you by your rule, your state of life, your office, or the command of him whom you are bound to obey; by charity, by necessity, by your own free choice, by the laws which bind all men, or duties arising from particular circumstances; have you been careful to perform them all with ever-increasing fervour, so that, so far as lies in your power, and is under the control of your will, each work shall be more perfect than that which went before in fervour, height of aspiration and diligence, this fervour, aspiration, and diligence increasing ever and ever without limit, &c.

3. In such acts as are left to your choice have you made such selection and put in play your free will, calling up all your fervour, purity, and diligence, to the end that these actions

might become more grateful to God through the influence of your will, which secures that all shall be done in such manner as shall be most pleasing to God, omitting whatever would render them less pleasing?

4. Not content with securing that the circumstances of your actions shall be pleasing to God, have you taken care, with regard to the actions themselves, to choose such as shall be most pleasing, omitting what will be less acceptable? We must esteem those actions and those circumstances to be more pleasing to God by which God is more exalted and man humbled; in which he that does the action seeks not nor aims at anything for himself; in which God is sought with a higher purity and more absolute resignation; where there is more intensity of fervour and charity and a higher degree of diligence, determination, earnestness, cheerfulness, patience under trials, perseverance, self-abandonment, absolute devotion, neglect, and death itself, &c.

5. Have you roused yourself daily, and how often in the day, and by what methods, to new fervour in the service of God and in the work of giving Him glory, resolving on this day

to serve God with more perfection than ever during this hour, this minute, with more exactness than in the preceding minute and hour, having ever-increasing perfection in the use of such a member of your body, such a power of your soul in such a passion, such an action, such a circumstance, so that you yourself and your own conscience, God and His all-seeing eye may find that you even surpass yourself in fervour, advancing with ever longer strides in fervour, purity, and diligence? But herein, and in like occasion, although our intellect grasps the matter, knowing that the thing may be done and our will resolved so to act, and our resolution makes the endeavour, nevertheless our strength fails to carry out in effect that perfection which we have contemplated and desired. But before God there is merit in our knowledge, in our will and endeavour, for God weighs us, not according to our power, but according to that which we know and desire, and resolve upon and endeavour. No one then must be terrified by what we have said, but rather find in it encouragement.

6. Have you set before yourself God as the Model Whom you will imitate? That as

God in all His works uses all His power and His whole Being, so you throw yourself wholly into all you do; not indeed as regards the work itself, but as concerns the end that you propose to yourself, the enhancement of the glory of God by this work.

7. In all that you do, and in every exercise of the powers of the soul, have you been careful to advance in fervour, height of aspiration, and diligence, making sure that this advance shall itself be ever more and more rapid till it attain the highest possible perfection, reaching the height of the Divine Majesty?

8. Have you done or desired and attended to all your actions with such zealous determination as to do violence to Heaven, yea, to pierce the Heart of God?

9. Have you ever had the presence of God vividly before your eyes, using the remembrance of it to stir yourself to devotion, admiration, imitation, to desire of pleasing Him and satisfaction of your devotion, so as to be absorbed in God, and, as it were, withdrawn from yourself?

10. As you have desired to exalt God, have you been equally careful to lower yourself, to

hate yourself as you love God, to mistrust yourself with diffidence as you hope and trust in God, to lose and abandon yourself no less than you have striven to seek and find God?

11. In all your conduct are you careful and exact, doing all things deliberately and with full self-command, with a certain supernatural dignity arising from due respect for the presence of God, of yourself, and of other men, never giving way to haste, precipitation, or engrossment of mind, turning aside to what is natural, sensual, and devoted to self?

12. Have you aimed at diligence, high aspiration, and fervour in performing all ordinary and common actions, however few, and not at devising novelties and taking them to yourself in ever-increasing number, hurrying on for the sake of doing the thing with barren activity, making the order of your actions, the observance of your rules, whether in the cloister or out of it, and attention to your own maxims and private resolutions, agree with the light granted to your intellect and the determination that is found in your heart?

13. Have you endeavoured, as far as may be, to increase the number of the circumstances of all

your actions and sufferings, both as regards the powers of your soul, which have part in the performance of the work, and as regards the objects connected with them, also as regards all creatures around, and all circumstances that have any part in the work; for example, making them all your own, linking them to your work, doing it with the affections that they would have, taking to yourself all their influence, powers, and substance, acting in the name of them all, and as though they were subject to your command and guided by your will and intention directing them to God, ascribing them to Him and making to Him the offering of them; so as to praise God by the use you make of so many creatures, not permitting any creature to fail to praise God, and turning all creatures and all circumstances into means to serve God, and to increase in love for Him, and supplying all that is deficient in them all?

14. Have you aimed at doing all your actions, even such as are natural and bodily, and at enduring all sufferings great and small, as though this act or this endurance were the sole means destined to be your salvation, and as though in

this action or suffering you would do a thing most pleasing to God and full of glory to Him?

15. Have you this day done all things, or one single act, as though this doing this act were the last of your life, and were a means of salvation and efficacious grace in which you were offered the gift of that fervour which vies the appointed path to your predestination?

16. In all these matters, and in all things else, have you thrown yourself into the arms of the grace of God?

17. Have you always and utterly mistrusted yourself, hoping nothing from your own endeavours?

18. In all your undertakings, and especially in what we have mentioned, have you sought to purchase the assistance of Christ our Lord and His Blessed Mother for yourself and for all others? What price have you offered? How faithfully have you kept your bargain? How often?

The Fourth Point will be to notice the impediments that stand in the way of your perfect and exact, continual and careful observance of all that has been said; calling to mind your

negligence and dilatoriness, omission, forgetfulness, you will blot out their effects by your sorrow and by the punishment you will take upon yourself; you will resolve an amendment, in conformity with what has been laid down, and at once carry out your resolve, in the very first action that follows this Examen.

The Fifth Point will be that, conscious how small is your strength, you will ask efficacious grace of God, as, for example, by the following prayer:

"Lord God, of my own will, which Thou helpest by Thy grace, and which Thou hast given to me, I desire that Thou, without Whom I am nothing and can do nothing, give me a new and efficacious grace that I may serve Thee newly by all the actions of myself and all creatures, persons, things, and circumstances; by their and my passions, powers, parts; and that I may do this ever more and more worthily, for such is Thy will and that which befits Thy will. And I beg Thee without Whom I am nothing and can do nothing to give me renewed and efficacious grace to accomplish this my resolve."

The one object of this method, as is evident from the whole course of it, is to examine, excite, and maintain our fervour. In following it we consider this fervour under three different heads; namely as regards (1) our fervour itself, our devotion and the earnestness of our devotion and goodwill, (2) the singleness, loftiness and purity of our intention, (3) our diligence, earnestness and attention in executing it. For these three must of necessity be joined together in every work that deserves the name of an act of fervour or the grace and merit that belong to such an act. The practice of this Examen should be regarded by spiritual and perfect men as of the greatest value at all times, but more especially in the morning when it should be made as a prelude to all the acts of the day. It should also be used in the month of January, in order that with the beginning of the new year we may conceive and draw together a new ardour in the service of God for the whole twelve months, so that our new year resolutions may be like to those which are proposed for our consideration in the first point.

TENTH METHOD.

AN EXAMEN AS TO THE CAUSES OF OUR MORE COMMON, AND ESPECIALLY OUR DAILY, FAULTS.

It is evident that there are certain causes of our sins and failings, and that there are many such causes. It should be equally evident to us that of these causes some are more manifest, others more hidden. In this method some of these causes, and, for the most part, those which are more subtle and hidden and which are most deeply and intimately inwoven in our character are set forth for the consideration even of the perfect. This consideration of them is of the greatest importance with a view to progress in the spiritual life, for without it our daily defects which either we do not properly attend to or regard as of little importance can never be corrected. For a flood of defects will burst out from these ever open sources, and the sources will remain open unless we close them, and how can they be closed unless

we first know where they are? Therefore we should find them out, consider them, and have them daily before our sight, and this can be done by the following method of examining ourselves.

The First Point will include a recollection of the Divine dominion over us and over all creatures, a dominion which is absolute, exists to the fullest extent, and is in the highest sense complete: it will also include a thanksgiving for benefits received and a sublime act of esteem and love of the Divine Perfection for its own sake.

The Second Point will include a prayer (1) for light, (2) for such lively contrition that it will penetrate the soul and establish it firmly in good, so that it may always live before God a spotless life without ever turning aside to sin or error.

The Third Point will include the taking up and full examination of the following points which are the common sources of many defects, to which pious souls are daily subject, thereby staining themselves in the sight of their spouse. 1. Want of recollection before, during and after our acts and neglecting to

make them the subject of deliberate election. 2. A certain languor of mind and tepidity which weakens the active power and energy of our fervour, and prevents us from realizing our resolutions in acts and from making our desires and the execution of them correspond to the light granted to our intellect. 3. Inconstancy in things in which we have made a good beginning or a good resolution, and this on account of affairs either of little importance or which might equally well be put off to another time. Thus trifles stand in the way of matters of the greatest moment. 4. Putting off from day to day, and from hour to hour what should be done this very moment. 5. A certain overconfidence in ourselves, by which we hope to make up such losses, and flatter ourselves that there is no difficulty and that we shall easily supply the deficiency. 6. Defects of intention, in that we either make none, or it is not pure but mingled with some regard for our own advantage, or it is too long since we formed it, it has grown cold and has not been lately renewed. 7. Want of resignation and of resolution, human fears, feelings of bitterness that are often groundless, and only imaginary,

springing from some fancy with which we delude ourselves. 8. Self-enjoyment and seeking our own convenience and the mere gratification of nature, paying court and service to ourselves and yielding to our own weakness. 9. Hurry and disturbance, loss of presence of mind and self-control, haste, a restless inquietude that has no reasonable cause, but deceives itself, robs a man of his time, throws the order of his day into confusion, and makes him defer or omit many of his accustomed practices. 10. Want of thought and foresight, both as to what we have to do and as to what may occur to us, whence it happens that what we do not expect suddenly assails and throws us into confusion. The same is the tendency of our own forecasts when they take into account only a few possibilities, so that should the event be other than we anticipated the result is disturbance and discontent in our own minds, and irritated feelings against those who are the cause of it. We should therefore desire all things to happen just as they occur, and this not only after the event, but also before their occurrence, being willing that they should be as they may be, provided only that they do

not go amiss through our own fault. 11. An obstinate adherence to our own purpose and arrangements so that if we are compelled to diverge from them by the interference of something of necessity, we are disturbed in mind and begin to give sharp replies. 12. A certain way of justifying and excusing ourselves even when we are in the wrong,or when we have made or are making a mistake, and this before others and against the testimony of our own heart. 13. Hiding from ourselves and as it were burying and affecting to overlook in our conscience our errors and defects, the feelings of remorse they cause us and the inward admonitions we receive. 14. Disorder in our actions as regards time, either not doing things in due order or having no fixed order. 15. Avoiding what causes us shame and confusion and being silent before God, our conscience, or our confessor as to those defects which affect us in this way. 16. Giving scandal to others in little things. 17. Putting obstacles in the way of graces that excite and urge us to do good by shutting our eyes to them or by making delays. 18. Omitting little things, avoiding taking trouble and giving one's full attention to the

matter in hand, and trifling. 19. Leaving oneself too little time for anything, whence result hurry, omissions, and careless execution of business. 20. Various faults of commission from old habit, or for the sake of some one else. 21. Matters in which we are usually and frequently at fault, *e.g.*, giving way to the cravings of appetite, or to a spirit of contradiction, or too much eagerness, or curiosity, and so on. 22. Hopes, fears, delays, dissimulation from human respect or worldly policy. 23. Contempt especially of little things which are either not of obligation, or not enjoined under pain of sin. 24. Forgetfulness, which sometimes comes from trusting too much to the memory. 25. The force of habit, or, on the other hand, the want of it. 26. Human friendships, by the arguments of which we are easily and agreeably persuaded to this or that course. 27. Want of strength of mind and consequent weakness of conviction and a ready abandonment of serious matters good resolutions and undertakings for things of no importance. 28. *Causa non causa,* false reasons, or taking as a motive for acting or not acting what really is not a sufficient reason. For example, it occurs

to me that the clock has not struck, and that therefore I need not raise my mind to God, and I omit to do so. Or again it occurs to me to do this or that and then I recollect that my usual time for it is past, and I do not do it although I might conveniently and advantageously have done it. Or I resolve to pray, and then it comes into my mind that there is no picture or statue before me, or that the one I have is very rough, and so I give up my prayer, although the rudeness of a statue or picture is no reason for not praying, for one can pray before a very inartistic statue or even with none at all.

The Fourth Point will include an act of sorrow for the faults committed, some satisfaction for them, and a prayer for pardon.

The Fifth Point will include a fortifying and strengthening of heart and will even against the smallest faults, and to this should be directed the chief effort and exertion we make in this Examen that we may rise up from it with the will stronger, more energetic, more wary and as it were more firm and concentrated, so that it may not easily slip into these defects. For this purpose too the

Examen should conclude with an humble confession and earnest prayer to God, that by His power and grace our will may be made firm and strong, so that with His aid our thoughts for the rest of the day may keep as it were a festival before our Lord.

ELEVENTH METHOD.

AN EXAMEN AFTER THE MANNER OF THE CENSORSHIP.

We know from their history what was the duty of the Censors and what the Censorship was among the ancient Romans. It will be advantageous to his progress in virtue if the spiritual man will at times exercise this office of censor in reference to his own personal Republic or State, in order that by this census of all his members powers, occupations, actions, exercises, sufferings, and affairs, he may obtain a knowledge of their condition, means of action, the obstacles in their way, their defects and faults, their profit or fruitlessness and where necessary inflict punishment. The present method therefore lays down the means of exercising this censorship, which should be like a final and official examination and judgment by a supreme power and a supreme judge, such as will be God's judgment of each individual at

the moment of death and at the last day. The order of the Examen will be as follows:—

1. With a view to make this Examen and act of censorship, he who makes it will put off his own personality, endeavouring to be in such a frame of mind as if being not himself but some one else he were to sit in judgment as judge and censor upon some one other than himself and that man his own foe, the foe of God, and guilty in the highest degree.

2. He will assume the personality of his Lord, that is of Jesus Christ, into Whose hands the Father has given all judgment, and thus in the presence and as it were in the person of Jesus Christ (such as Daniel or St. John or He Himself describes Him) let him judge himself.

3. Let him place himself in his own presence stripped of everything, alone, covered with the filth of his sins, guilty, abject, weighed down by them, miserable (if he wishes he may add—dying and at the very point of death) already convicted by his own conscience, and now as it were brought before the tribunal of one who acts as judge and censor in the name of God.

4. Let him then see what manner of life he

has led during the time to be examined—the year, half-year, month, day, hour, or part of a day or any given space of time,—how much there is in it of carelessness, over-eagerness, sensuality, imperfect fervour, inconstancy, bitter feeling, and so forth. Let him see how far his good actions were perfect, how much has he exerted the powers of his mind, and taken care of even the smallest particulars. Let him see how far he has inclined to evil in things either bad in themselves, or flattering to the senses, or indifferent, how often, and if his falls were repeated, or if he struggled against or concealed from himself the light of conscience when it made a protest against the act or when it raised a doubt as to whether he should do it or not, or whether it should be done in such or such a way. Let him see what he has omitted or neglected, when was this, how often and why: let him consider what trifles have kept him from doing great things which would have been pleasing to God, how many opportunities he has disregarded, how many inspirations, resolutions, good examples, motives and reasons derived from sublime and eternal truths! Let him consider his daily circum-

stances, those in particular of his actions, his sufferings, his course of life, and see what he has derived from them to his loss or to his profit and advantage, and how far he has been taught or warned thereby. Let him see how he has made up for his failings, and by what manner of compensation, satisfaction, and penance he has done so. Let him see if he has handed back everything faithfully to God at all previous times, and to-day, and (if the Examen is made in the evening) now at the end of the day; has he faithfully and honestly preserved, increased, and made profit of what has been given him, and fully, entirely, and resolutely resigned all this and made it a sacrifice and holocaust to God's will, power, providence, favour, good pleasure, and glory. Let him consider how has his soul been bathed and cleansed in the laver of Jesus Christ. Let him see what punishment he has inflicted upon himself as a servant who is useless, idle, wicked, unprofitable, wasteful, unfaithful, and thankless, both as regards himself and as regards the whole community of creatures and God and Christ. Finally, let him consider with what energy, rigour, constancy, with what

fidelity to God, and zeal to make amends to and keep the law of God, with what exactness even in the smallest matters, with what absence of self-deceit, hurry, confusion, and of mere passing consideration of the matter, the present act of censorship has been and is being performed, and whether it is equal to or better than that of yesterday.

5. The act of censorship having been thus performed, if he finds himself guilty and in fault, let him change his position, putting himself in the lowest place and in the very depth of it, and then let him inflict further penance on himself, and this with greater earnestness at least in his interior affections towards God as all good, just, loveable, worthy of all service and supreme over all things. Finally, having dealt with himself to the best of his power, let him give himself up to God, that He may moreover deal with him as He pleases, that He may have mercy on him according to His wisdom and good pleasure, and inflict on him that punishment which He can justly assign him, and which the sinner knows and confesses he has deserved. Thus let him give himself up and leave himself to the supreme, absolute, and

adorable will of God, abandoning himself to it and burying himself therein.

This exercise of censorship will never be out of place, but with especial fitness the close of the day, just before retiring to rest, may be set apart for it, when all the actions of the day having been performed, accomplished, and finished, they may all be summoned to this final and judicial account, in order that in conclusion they may be perfected, whatever is faulty in them expiated, whatever is defective supplied. And this too in such a way that this act of censorship should not only deal with all that has previously been done throughout the day, but should exert its influence on itself, and include an Examen as to how this censorship is performed. An exercise of this kind has many practical advantages:—to omit all others, it has this advantage, that by its means, as far as may be, one may nearly always be free from all debt of guilt and punishment before God, and I know not what greater blessing than this one can desire for himself. And to conclude, whatever might be said about other advantages, what is more just than that one who can never be quite free from faults and

defects, should also never neglect a diligent atonement for these same faults and defects. I indeed am of opinion that a man who really desires to make progress in spiritual things, as he daily through frailty deserves the pains of Purgatory, can also, and ought, if he be wise, every day free himself from what he has deserved; and he can accomplish this both in various other ways and by the careful and diligent use of this exercise, performing it without haste and giving it a proper amount of time.

TWELFTH METHOD.

AN EXAMEN IN WHICH VIRTUES ARE OPPOSED TO VICES.

We read in the Lives of the Saints that certain holy men while on their way to their heavenly country after death, were stopped as if by toll-takers at a barrier, and there detained until either they had proved that they had made satisfaction for their faults committed in this life by setting against them the merits of their virtues and good works, or until they had made adequate atonement for them then and there without any delay. This has suggested the method of examination which is set forth in the present exercise, which explains a manner of examining ourselves in which by the contrary, or at least by some other good works, virtues, and good desires, we make compensation for, free ourselves from, and as

it were pay the debt and ransom of our defects and sins.*

We may thus make compensation and atonement for our defects in various ways:—

1. By acts of the virtues which are directly contrary to our faults and defects; *e.g.*, for acts of pride by acts of humility, for intemperance in eating by fasting, for talkativeness by silence, and hence this method of Examen takes its name, and this is the best way to make progress and acquire habits of the virtues which are opposed to our vices.

2. This compensation and opposition may be effected in another way by setting off virtuous actions against vicious acts one by one, even where by their nature they are not directly opposed to each other, provided they are thus opposed by the intention attributed to them by the will, and thus may ransom and atonement be made. It was in this sense that Daniel said to the King of Babylon: "Redeem thou thy sins with alms;"† and that Christ declared: "But yet that which remaineth,

* See Raderus, I. parte *Viridarii Sacratissimorum*, 28 Apr. Cap. entitled, "Historia de Miraculo Carthagine in Africa facto," fol. 212. 1627.

† Daniel iv. 24.

give alms and all things are clean unto you."*

3. This compensation and atonement may be made not by opposing virtuous and vicious actions one by one to each other, but by opposing many acts of virtue to each vicious act, in order to make more abundant compensation.

4. It may moreover be made by progression, multiplication, or proportion, two acts of virtue being set off against the first fault, four against the second, eight against the third, sixteen against the fourth. We read that Blessed John Berchmans and other holy men were accustomed to make use of an exercise of this kind. But it must be employed with discretion, lest by the continual progression and counting the mind should be over-strained.

5. This compensation may also be made by setting off one act of virtue against many vicious acts, but this in such a way that the act of virtue shall be earnest, brilliant, heroic, or from its nature of the highest standard and degree of virtue, or joined with a sacrament or with the Holy Mass, or connected with the

* St. Luke xi. 41.

mortification of the senses, of the appetite, of the desire of honour, of our own opinion, will, judgment, &c.

And whenever our faults cannot be reasonably and conveniently compensated for by acts of directly contrary virtues, it will be sufficient to make satisfaction by some internal or even external penance, together with a purpose of amendment, or by some other good work. Moreover, this Examen too should be reduced to the usual and proper form, which may be as follows:—

The First Point will consist of an act of thanksgiving for benefits received.

The Second Point will consist of a prayer for light.

The Third Point will consist of a careful consideration of the following heads:—

1. See if you have performed all those actions which you are ordinarily accustomed and bound by the order and usage of your state of life to perform. If you have omitted any, immediately make them up.

2. Whether you have performed them in that manner, with that motive, that purity of intention, that diligence, in the place, at the

moment, and during the space of time assigned by the rules of your community or your own private rules, if you discover any omission that can be made up, do so at once, or note it and hold it over to be supplied for at the end. For this purpose it will be useful to have before us a list of our actions, the times at which they are to be performed, and the points to be observed in doing them. In all this one will find more or less difficulty according as in one's ordinary life one brings to one's actions more or less presence of mind and recollection, and performs them with diligence and in an orderly way. But he who does not practise this will not even understand the points we here propose for examination.

3. You will examine in particular those of your actions which relate directly to God, such as your prayers, Mass, Office, the lifting up of your mind to God, ejaculatory prayers, remembrance of the presence of God. Also those which regard yourself, such as recollection, self-command, the ordinary acts of the day, dressing, washing, eating, walking, performing the work you are employed upon. Also those which regard your Superior, such as exact

obedience with submission of will and judgment, recognizing in him the mouthpiece of Christ and God, showing him love and reverence and defending his authority both in your own mind and before others. Under this head of the Superior I include the living man, the written law, the customs of community life, and also the sound of the bell. Also those duties which regard your equals, such as giving good example, keeping customs, showing mutual charity, avoiding in yourself those things which might be annoying to others, &c. Also those which relate to your subjects, such as your care to maintain discipline, your method of government, the providing of what they need, a kindly limitation of your authority, a spontaneous offering to them of those things which it is either necessary or desirable they should have, timely warnings, gentleness in correction, and punishment of faults. Also those things which regard your office, the community, and externs.

4. Then more in particular examine your recollection in regard to yourself, to God, and to the use of your reason, also the practice of preluding all your actions with forethought and a deliberate election; also the watchfulness of

your reason over yourself whilst you act, over your conscience as it gives you any warning or suggestion, and over those circumstances and means by which your act may be made more or less pleasing to God.

5. You will look to your practice of and love for reflection and meditation, the earnestness and frequency with which you use it, and if you overcome its difficulties. Also the practice of raising the mind to God by ejaculatory prayer,—are these ejaculations frequent, and inflamed or made with a mind that is distracted and intent on something else? Were they made with a mind resting and reposing in them for some time, and by this repose wholly raising itself to God and setting itself on fire, or were they done coldly, hastily, hurriedly, without there being any reason for such haste?

6. Look to the use of the tongue,—when, with whom, what words, or about what have you spoken, in what manner, with how much feeling and in what direction? was it at a proper and fitting time, without violating the discipline of the community, and this even if it was about necessary matters which however could be deferred to a more suitable time?

7. Look to your respect, love and esteem of silence, even in your own heart, even when you are alone, even in avoiding noise, singing, &c.

8. Look to your mastery and control over the appetite, as to the quantity of your food, the manner of taking it, avoidance of haste in eating, and mortification of the appetite by delaying in order to observe your accompanying good practices.

9. See what you have done prompted by nature, what indulgences you have allowed her merely at her demand and without advertence, or from your natural disposition, and at once or shortly after atone for them by enduring something harsh and troublesome.

10. See whether you have anticipated anything, or been punctual in following the order of time for your actions.

11. See whether you put your hope in God, or disregard His Providence and His care—whether it be of yourself and your affairs, especially those of your body, those relating to your office, and those moreover which relate to your soul (your own cooperation not being left out of account, but all confidence in your cooperation and your own exertions being ex-

cluded)—or His care of all other things in the whole world, in the Church, the Kingdom, your Province, the House.

12. Examine yourself as to improper delays or anticipations of work, to which you have recourse in the hope of making up for them afterwards.

13. Examine yourself as to thoughts of the future, such as are contrary to a pure spirit of resignation.

14. Examine yourself as to imaginations and apprehensions, especially such as are accompanied by melancholy and bitterness, also discussions in your own mind and imaginary conversations with such or such persons, on these or those matters which belong entirely or almost entirely to the future, and also those that belong to the past and are gone and cannot be amended. Such discussions disturb our thoughts and prayers, rob us of our time, leave rooted in the mind a baneful bitterness of feeling, are the cause of an habitual dislike against certain persons, and make us ready to find fault with and speak against others, to rail at and despise them.

15. Look to the observance of your resolu-

tions and of the good practices assigned to each year, month, week, day and connected with your various actions and occupations. Have you observed or omitted them and why?

16. Examine the aimless, idle, merely natural use of the members and senses—especially of touch and sight, in the same way examine your gestures and glances, your movements and action generally.

17. Your ordinary intercourse with equals, inferiors, superiors,—has fraternal charity been injured and not repaired? is it still to be repaired? is this debt of charity unpaid? have you neglected to exhibit charity in your conduct?

18. Examine if the example of fidelity to community life which you ought to give in public has not been given, to the loss of edification to others.

19. Look to the consideration you have had for yourself, for your own convenience, feelings, honour, influence, occupations, for your deserts as regards such a one or the community, for the excuses too made by you to yourself and to others, which you make use of as if you were in the right and exact from others as if they

should think with you and make the same excuses for you in their own minds. Examine too your esteem for supernatural merits, which indeed we should strive to increase in every action, acting always meritoriously, but not so acting for the sake of the merit, but because it is pleasing to God, so that our very merits shall not be gained on account of the merit of our actions, but because we do them for the good pleasure of God.

20. Examine those of your actions which of themselves are good, but for some other reason are imperfect, have been left unfinished, or have been done carelessly.

21. See whether you have done or left undone anything through human respect, fear or shame.

22. See what service you do not for God's sake, but to please some other, or for the sake of useless praise, or from any affection or hope.

23. Examine any hidden wish that others should think of you and your affairs, or any feeling of this kind.

24. See if there is any hidden inward desire for things which you openly give out that you do not care for, or have never wished for—also if there is any hidden feeling of annoyance

caused by any occurrence or the act of anyone, although you deny that you are annoyed, and yet this very denial springs from the matter in question and from that very internal annoyance, as would be clear, if only iniquity did not lie to itself, but would look into the depths of its conscience.

25. Look to your obedience, docility and tractability on the instant to the voice of reason, to your conscience, and to the grace of God on all occasions and in all matters, but especially with regard to prayer, observance of order, and your power of witholding yourself from any work not yet begun, or any conversation, or any tempting confidential communication with anyone.

26. See whether in your actions, or in examining yourself either in this or in some other Examen, you have allowed yourself to be negligent with the idea and expectation that you would make up for it afterwards either in this or some other Examen.

27. See if, and how you have compensated for those things which in a previous Examen of this kind or in any other you had decided should be made up or atoned for.

28. See if you have performed or are performing this very Examen in which you have been or are engaged so as to satisfy in all particulars the claims of God, of reason and of the needs of your soul.

29. Examine whether you keep yourself in constant communion and union with your Creator, with the Church Triumphant and Militant, also whether you avail yourself of the merits and treasures of the Church, especially of the merits of Jesus Christ—whether, as it were, you steep yourself, your faculties, your actions, your aims and the circumstances of your actions and sufferings in the Blood of Jesus Christ, doing so for instance when you dress, speak, eat, &c.

The Fourth Point will consist of a recapitulatory reflection on any of the aforesaid negligences that have been discovered under the various heads here set forth. Then counting up their number or making use of any other method of obtaining an estimate of them, you will proceed to make actual compensation for them, to set off good deeds against them, or to pay ransom for them. And if there should be any reasonable impediment to prevent your

separately considering all the heads that are given above, at least give a proper and sufficient time to reflecting, for instance, upon your life during this day, and considering by the light of conscience that is within you of what kind and of what worth it is, and having counted up a number of negligences and faulty acts and made an estimate of them, let compensation and atonement be made for them by setting off other acts against them as reason may direct.

The Fifth Point will contain a purpose of amendment for the future, and as far as may be let this be particular and specific, having reference to such and such definite points, occasions, matters, etc.

The Sixth Point will consist of the acts of compensation and atonement, first indeed and before all in the interior, and then by outward deeds so that the latter may derive their strength and efficacy from the former. But let this be done in a methodical way by means of the acts which have been mentioned above from the beginning of this exercise, these acts either equalling or better still exceeding what is due for our defects in number, earnestness, and

excellence and purity of intention. Moreover let it be done by means of acts which inflict pain, humiliation, and shame, or which deprive us of something pleasant—also by making use of the merits of the Blood of Jesus Christ, of His Blessed Mother, of the Saints and of the whole Church—making use too of the Mass and of its most efficacious and propitiatory effects; together with the most absolute resignation in all circumstances to the will of God; and in His presence taking account of the most exalted Majesty of God, His dominion and His Love, and with this in every way abandoning, mortifying, giving up and annihilating self.

This Examen (as indeed is the case for the most part with all others of the same nature), even when performed with some negligence, cannot but be very advantageous for our progress in all virtues, and for our remaining in God's sight worthy of His favour and free from every debt both of guilt and of temporal punishment. Nor (after the grace of God and the use of the Sacraments and the Holy Sacrifice, which I do not put aside, but rather desire should be united to the practice of this Exercise

and Examen) can a more useful method be found of escaping the punishments whether of this life or of Purgatory, than this of making compensation by setting off one thing against another, and so expiating and paying ransom for our faults and the chastisement due to our faults.

THIRTEENTH METHOD.

A METHOD OF EXAMINING OURSELVES AS TO VIRTUES AND THE OCCASIONS OF VIRTUE, AND AS TO THE USE WE MAKE OF THEM, AND OF THE ACTUAL GRACES GIVEN TO US IN THEM.

We have an infinite number of opportunities both for evil and for good. For the will of the Eternal Godhead so arranges that in no time or place are we without occasions of merit—of merit, I say, either by avoiding or overcoming the occasions of evil, or by taking advantage and making use of good opportunities or those which present themselves for doing good. And so the life of man is rightly called a trial and a warfare upon the earth, and man is said to be born to toil as the bird to flight. In fact, why should we have been provided with reason, foresight, memory, reflection, deliberation, election, liberty, were it not that we have constant opportunities of using these faculties which

alone give us superiority over the brutes? It is true that many men employ these faculties for far different purposes; but the just, and they that love perfection, ought not in their life to follow the example of such as heed not the guidance of nature, and pervert it, but they should obey nature and right reason, employing their faculties to study and carry out the purposes which God had in view in creating and bestowing these same faculties, and occupy themselves unceasingly in the exercise of them. For this is the one purpose for which, as St. Paul says,* God made all the race of man to dwell on the whole face of the earth, determining appointed times and the limits of their habitation, that they should seek God if happily they may feel after Him or find Him: find Him by the use of reason, of free will, by distinguishing between good and evil, vileness and rectitude, that which is better and that which is best, between means and end; also by rejecting whatever is opposed to rectitude, and by the earnest pursuit of all that is conformed to reason and to the uprightness, determination, and will of

* Acts xvii. 26, 27.

God. This, then, is the proper work of man, but it suits not perverse men, who are hard to correct and easy to turn to evil, who work evil in sport and drink in iniquity as water, who call good evil and evil good, and say to God, "Depart from us, we will not know Thy ways, for he that serves God is foolish." The work I speak of does not belong to these, but to such as are desirous of what is comely, who love truth and do it, who hunger and thirst after justice, whose will is in the law of the Lord day and night, whose reason is the eternal law, who love the commandments of God above gold and precious stones, above honey and the honeycomb. These are they who avoid all occasion of evil or overcome it, seize every occasion of good and make it their own. The exercise on which we are now engaged lays down the rules for examination upon occasions, and the use of occasions such as everywhere present themselves, and especially in our daily actions, that so we may exercise virtue and avoid imperfection. The parts and points of this Examen will be the following:

The First Point will consist of thanksgiving

to God for His actual graces, for His helps, and the occasions which this Fount of graces has freely allowed you for performing acts of virtue in thought, word, and work.

The Second Point will contain the petition for great and effectual light, that you may perceive the occasions of virtuous actions and the actual graces which have been given by God and neglected, or it may be employed by yourself.

The Third Point will consist of a study of the various heads under which we may collect the graces, inspirations, and opportunities of exercising virtue which we commonly experience, or have in fact experienced, or which we should have enjoyed but for our own fault.

First Head.—Our ordinary daily actions, such as rising, prayer, celebrating or hearing Mass, study, the Divine Office, our meals, our employment whatever it be. In all these we have occasions of virtue contained in our actions, or supplied by them, inasmuch as they of their own nature require them, or such as we of our own will join to the rest.

Second Head.—Extraordinary actions do not occur daily, nor on any other fixed days, but

must from time to time be done without our foreseeing their approach. These chance occasions require of us suitable actions, in which there are occasions of virtue as before explained. Although these extraordinary occasions cannot be foreseen in each particular instance, we may nevertheless make some general provision for them, arranging the principles on which we are to act when the opportunity occurs. Foresight and preparation of this kind will secure us great readiness of action, will hinder much imprudence, and secure right conduct, whereas without this foresight we shall lose these advantages.

Third Head.—Some actions are ordinary, but occupy no long time or do not occur every day, but are ordinarily performed upon fixed days. Such are to go to confession, to receive Holy Communion, to use some external penance in private or in public, to serve in the refectory, kitchen, or elsewhere, to attend at sermons and exhortations, to visit places of devotion or certain persons. In all these works we find many occasions for the exercise of virtue.

Fourth Head.—Unregulated actions are so

called because they are commonly done without reference to the rule of right reason, and much less to any supernatural rule, even in the case of those who have attained perfection. Such are, to look round when a noise is heard or any person enters the room, to indulge unrestrained laughter, to fail to keep the hands or fingers still during conversation. These actions are ordinarily under no rule, and in fact it is scarcely consistent with man's weakness to bring them all under the rule of reason. But such persons as have their passions thoroughly under control find it possible to restrict the number of these actions or bring them under the guidance of reason, as we read in the Lives of the Saints.

Fifth Head.—Actions which one spontaneously resolves on, which are not usual with others, are to be reckoned ordinary in respect of him that has adopted them. They must be consistent with general discipline and in themselves good, or at least not bad. Such are certain bodily actions and exercises which one may daily practise; also the use of fixed vocal prayers, the Office of the Immaculate Conception, the Passion, or of some Saint, to

visit one of the community who may be sick, and the like.

Sixth Head.—We may do the work that belongs to others who may be hindered from performing it, or negligent or absent, or if another ask us to take his place, or other works which obedience does not assign to any one in particular. Thus we may take the places of the sick or absent in serving at table or in the kitchen, in sweeping the rooms or any public place, in serving Mass in place of another, in relieving him by preaching, catechizing, or hearing confessions, in taking to ourself the worst things which others have passed over in the matter of clothing, food, bed, books, or room; to be ready to listen kindly when we are asked to assist another or supply for him, or even to be forward in offering our services; by care in using vacant intervals of time, devoting them to God by prayer, reading, and pious actions, by bearing with the inconvenience if another neglects to do his duty on your behalf, or is careless and awkward, never complaining of his conduct, especially to those who have it in their power to punish the delinquent, unless good reason

require some other course; allowing the faults of others to be imputed to you, provided they are not serious faults, avoiding the risk of bringing blame on another by excusing yourself.

Seventh Head.—The special acts of that virtue which each one proposes to himself to be exercised during the current month. Not only ought all the ordinary actions of this month to be performed in the spirit of this virtue, but we must also take care to perform a fixed number of peculiar acts of the same virtue on fixed opportunities on every day of the month.

Eighth Head.—The methods to be followed in performing our actions, whether chosen by ourselves or what is of more importance, such as are the usages of common life. These are, our methods of rising in the morning, taking our meals, studying, and the like. These and similar works offer the opportunity of many virtues, they are also commonly the occasions and seed-plots whence spring inspirations and actual graces, as to which we must examine whether we have used them and reduced them to practice. As regards the occasions of virtue,

first of all we must have regard to obedience, common life and discipline, good example, love of God and of our brethren, our rules, discretion, prudence, good intention, and constancy. Then we must have regard to the example of Christ our Lord and His teaching, to our Blessed Mother and the Saints. Next we must look for chances of humiliation and opportunities of suffering, in the interior and exterior alike. Again we must look to perfection, and the heroic degree of virtue attaining to it, in all our acts, having for instance a *most pure* intention, a sense of the presence of God, coupled with the *deepest* reverence, a *burning* love for God and for our neighbour, *unwearied* attention, effort, application, diligence, intense fervour, absolute readiness of will and action, forgetfulness of self and of all one's good qualities, one's hopes, one's merits, one's will and inclination and arrangements, perfect and universal resignation and conformity to God's will, good pleasure, and Providence; a sacrifice of self which in no degree falls short of the purity and entireness of a holocaust; in our actions, and by means of our actions, they being done in charity,

that is, self-forgetting and unvarying, and this charity being their source, their motive, and their companion. Further, we must keep in mind the monthly exercise or virtue to which we have resolved to attend at this time, so that all things are done from the motive of this virtue and in its spirit, and the intention of acting according to this virtue, and special acts of the same, find a place in all that we do.

And now as regards actual graces. As to these we are better acquainted with the fact that the source of them is in our good works, than we are with the rule of their distribution. It is well to take note of them and as soon as we recognise them to grasp and use them to good effect. Some of these graces are usually assigned and proportioned to our good works, others again being granted without any reference to our good works, or at least to those we perform. On both kinds those who are given to piety should set the highest value. Meanwhile we would advise them in the present exercise to examine and devote their attention to those of the former kind, and we may say that the neglect of this is in the highest degree injurious. The spiritual man will therefore

consider what inspirations, lights, practice in virtue, movements of the will, teachings, consolation, incentives, suggestions, and as it were, attractions to good he usually receives in each of the actions of his life; also the fears, discouragements, and vexation he meets with in them. Also the distractions and the good suggestions, such as for example in the act of rising—"rise at once, make no delay—give the first fruits of your thoughts to God—make your accustomed acts of virtue in the usual way," etc. Or again in preparing for Mass—"give sufficient time to it, make the proper preparation and in the way to which you are accustomed, neglect no part of this preparation, add this or that to it, but avoid all that is irrelevant and does not befit such a time; you are now doing the work of a priest, not of this or that official." These and such like suggestions come to us with our actions if only we do not put any obstacle in their way. We give rise to such obstacles in various ways, for instance by over eagerness in external occupations, by irregularity in our way of living, by hurry and giving ourselves little time, by neglect of rules, by our daily venial sins, and perhaps not very

slight ones, by tepidity of heart, by neglect of inspirations, either in similar occasions, or in allowing ourselves to lose the habit of diligence in other occasions of this kind; moreover by self-seeking in our actions and in things connected with us, by unfaithfulness to God, ingratitude, rebellion against the light of conscience and truth, by a will that is vehement and disturbed, especially when this arises from cupidity, anger, bitter feeling, aversion of mind, impatience, recent anxiety and solicitude taking hold upon our fears or at least weighing upon us, while we on our part do not try to calm our minds with regard to it. I say nothing of mortal sins, with which just men, and especially those who are making progress, have no concern. On these impediments an Examen is to be made, and also—I repeat—it should be made as to the graces which are usually given to us if we put no obstacle in the way. "Have I received such graces? What were they? How often? How powerful and efficacious were they? How soon did I take notice of them? was I prompt in obeying them? or why did I not obey them? why (if I have not received them) am I deprived of them? what

obstacles have I put in their way, and from what cause?"

The Fourth Point will include an act of sorrow for the negligences you have committed, and some means of making amends for them. It will also include a thanksgiving for the graces and opportunities you have received, and for having been able to make use of them.

In *the Fifth Point* you will make a resolution of amendment in some particular matter; ask for pardon, and ask also for light for the understanding and strength for the will, and that you may take delight in both these favours, so that the result will be that you will make efficacious use of graces and opportunities of good, and thus advance in the practice of virtue.

This exercise and the method of Examen therein set forth is equivalent to several separate exercises and Examens. It should therefore be made great account of, and the practice of it should be made very familiar, especially to those who are making progress and aspiring to the highest degree of perfection.

FOURTEENTH METHOD.

A METHOD OF EXAMINING THE CONSCIENCE AS TO GRACES, LIGHTS, INSPIRATIONS, AND TRUTHS COMMUNICATED TO US BY GOD.

In the last exercise I have made mention of two kinds of graces, of which the former are given to us by God at those times when we are engaged in good works and are annexed to these works, while the latter are given as it were promiscuously, and not attached to any particular times or occupations, but are nevertheless given to us for our advantage, as we can make use of them in our acts. Both these kinds of graces are usually actual, but nevertheless it seems that both can and often do become habitual, for we find by experience that those lights, inspirations, incentives and suggestions to good remain habitually in our minds, and on fitting opportunities presenting themselves forthwith go on to acts and deeds.

But however this may be, I have set forth above an Examen on the former kind of graces, as well as on opportunities of virtue. In this present exercise I shall describe an Examen on the latter kind of graces, whether we are to call them actual or even habitual, which is the term I prefer. But before I set forth this method I would have you first attend to certain points bearing upon both kinds of graces or gifts of God to us.

And in the first place I note this, that God's gifts to us—that is those of the supernatural order—are twofold. Some there are which make him who possesses them pleasing and perfect before God; there are others which are as it were freely given, which do not of themselves make him who has them holy or pleasing to God, but which can very much advance him in that direction if there is moreover a good practical use of these gifts on the part of their possessor. We may certainly say this—we generally find two kinds of spiritual men, of men gifted with God's graces and favours. Some indeed are so enlightened by God with gifts, graces, lights, and knowledge of His truth that by means of all these they both can

instruct others, and are themselves also instructed thereby, and make progress before God in the practice of holiness and virtue. But there are others who are frequently and very clearly enlightened with God's gifts and graces, but these not for themselves but for others. They abound with clear convictions, lights, learning, and solid spiritual maxims; they can and do teach them to others, and by this means convince them, nay, even inflame them, with hatred of vice, and lead them with the greatest skill and spiritual discretion to practise virtue, to overcome their senses, and to avoid the dangers that threaten them, and the rocks that stand in their way, and thus they lead them to the summit of perfection. They can and do deduce practical conclusions on spiritual subjects from sound first principles, they can with a certain clearness and earnestness by well chosen similes, words, and phrases explain to others abstruse and sublime truths, and yet for the good and advancement of their own souls they make no use of these very truths as known to themselves, or use them rarely and to little purpose, and consequently they make little or even absolutely no

progress in perfection. This arises not so much from any defect of the gifts and graces of God (which are adapted to advance and perfect in good their possessor just as well as those to whom they communicate them) as from idleness, thoughtlessness, affection to some thing of sense or some created object, softness and effeminacy of mind, or habitual attachment to something base on the part of him who possesses them.

And as this ought by no means be tolerated in one gifted with such favours (for his position is most perilous, and he can derive from it no excuse before God or his conscience, nay there is rather an increase of punishment for one who has received such gifts, according to these words:—"The servant who knew the will of his Lord and did not according to His will shall be beaten with many stripes,"* and again: "Physician, heal thyself,"† "thou therefore that teachest another teachest not thyself,"‡ and "out of thy own mouth I judge thee thou wicked servant"§)—he who is in this position, and of such I believe there are not a few,

* St. Luke xii. 47. † St. Luke iv. 23.
‡ Rom. ii. 21. § St. Luke xix. 22.

guiding and directing others in spiritual matters, preaching, hearing confessions, &c.—he who is in this position will do well, I should say, if he will use the present exercise in which a method of examining oneself with regard to such gifts and graces is laid down, and the various kinds and classes of such gifts and graces are indicated. The object of the Examen is that each may see with what and how great light and knowledge of the spiritual life he abounds—light and knowledge which theoretically he regards as of great value, and as such communicates it to others, advising, nay enforcing upon them the practical use of it; and that he may see at the same time in due order how far he practically takes these lights and truths to himself, that is in what manner and with what care he himself makes use of them in his daily life, and by means of them makes progress and becomes better and holier, and why this is not so, or is not so in full proportion to the light he receives, why he does not prove, not by words only, but by his conduct that one can accomplish what he teaches, what he puts before others as not only possible, but necessary for them to do, nay, as

I have said, what he even enforces by his authority.

This much being understood it will not be difficult to lay down a method of Examen adapted to the present matter. Therefore—

The First Point will include a thanksgiving for the gifts of all kinds bestowed upon us by the hand of God, but most especially for those which give us light and knowledge, by making practical use of which we can advance in holiness, perfection, and favour before God.

The Second Point will contain a prayer for light from God in order to be able to discern fully and with fruit in what way I am wont to use for my good the lights, truths and inspirations vouchsafed to me, and whether I correspond in will and deed to the light in my intellect.

The Third Point will contain a careful consideration of these gifts. Which of them do I possess? To what extent? What use do I make of them? do I make full use of them? why not? And first indeed one should examine those common advantages which one possesses in virtue of one's state of life, and which one receives with the grace of vocation,

e.g., to religion or to the priesthood, or to such or such a position in a religious order, in the priesthood, in the Church, or in Christendom. And as it would be very long to go through all these here, I shall merely touch upon some which are common to all in the Society. To this class then I consider that the following belong :—

1. The Spiritual Exercises of our holy Father St. Ignatius, and all that is contained in that little work of our holy founder and therein taught by him.

2. The Constitutions and Rules, both those that are common to all and those that belong to particular offices, for every rule is a light to us, and to these I would add all the other explanatory portions of the Institute. And as these Rules are the work, after God, of so many and such great men who made, drew up, appointed and confirmed them—men full of prudence, and enlightened with experience by God, we must consider that all the lights they received, all their prudence and experience has its part in these rules, constitutions, and ordinances—how many lights then are there not concentrated as it were in the light of one

single rule? What recklessness, then, or rather what an insult to God and men it is to refuse to make use of the lights given us by our rulers—that is to say, not to live according to the dictates of our rules?

3. The daily and repeated use of the Examen, both General and Particular.

4. The use of meditation or mental prayer, for this is for the most part nothing else but the daily nourishment of our souls by means of lights, maxims, and truths drawn from the words and example of Christ and His Saints, and from our rules, to which we add affections of the will, resolutions, and petitions.

5. The manifestation of conscience to the Superior or Spiritual Father, which is in itself a most valuable means of teaching, and is the source of many maxims of conduct and lights for our guidance.

6. Renewals of spirit.

7. Times of recollection.

8. General confessions, whether they are yearly, or half-yearly, or even monthly, as is the custom with many.

9. To these we may add conversations on spiritual matters and spiritual instructions,

whether these be derived from books that are read, or sermons and domestic exhortations by which, as daily experience clearly proves, we are not only enlightened, but even set on fire.

10. Add to these too the instructions, lessons, and teachings, which we give or prepare in order to give to others, either to those of our house or to externs in the confessional, in sermons, exhortations, and spiritual directions. It is impossible that all these should not be useful to ourselves, and that they should not often remain as lights in our own minds, and that we should not be inflamed to accomplish these same things, or like things proportioned to our state of life and position therein.

All these are in themselves lights to us, and are moreover sources and fountains of light. Each one should therefore examine himself with regard to them and see: What use he makes of them? What fruit he derives from them? Whether he might do this to a greater extent? If so, why not? Why others obtain much greater fruit, and some of these it may be under his own guidance,

and urged on or commanded thereto by him? Certainly these means of grace are of such a kind that many of them, even taken separately, if they were given to men in other states of life, would be well calculated to make many saints in those states, and yet sometimes even when taken all together, and even with the addition on one part of many others, they do not produce that fruit of sanctity and perfection which they ought to do, and by their nature are capable of doing, and this only through the fault of our own sloth and carelessness.

Then whoever makes use of this Examen should look to his own gifts, those favours which are granted him for his own use, those special intimations he receives either by direct illumination from God, or through the medium of another by reading a book, or hearing an exhortation, or taking part in a familiar conversation with him, or from his instructions, or seeing his good example, or hearing of it, or in any other way. It is difficult to reduce these favours to definite classes, as for the most part they are different in every one who possesses them, and even if one receives them in common

with others, through many at the same time as him, drawing and collecting them from one source, yet even then they are generally different in different men, differing I say in the amount of light imparted to each, and moreover they are subject to a great variation in number, degree, &c. For what strikes one man, does not in the slightest move another, what carries away this man, that one does not even notice, what yesterday did not strike one, on another occasion remains fixed in the mind. Nay, it happens that one having heard something calculated to enlighten him, will be moved and influenced by it, and yet will not notice that he is drawing profit from it, and is under its influence unless he is warned of it by some other illumination, or his attention is otherwise directed to it by reflection and observation. But if I am to propose some heads on this matter which will include what is at least possible, and what, in some cases, usually takes place, they may be perhaps as follows—not that such is what actually occurs (in a given case), but we may take it for the sake of example:—

1. Therefore consider by what spirit you

are moved most frequently and with most pleasure—on what kind of subjects or truths it is your custom and is pleasing to you to meditate, read, write, speak, and hear others speak? What are the points you like to put before others and impress upon them, the points to which as to first principles, or at least maxims and precepts of great importance, you are wont to go back yourself and to refer others whom you admonish, teach, or direct. For we observe in holy men, and we read in their lives, that they generally reduced the whole course of their life and all their virtues either to one or at least a few definite main ideas and principles, some taking humility, some poverty, some zeal for souls, some external acts of charity to their neighbour, others again other virtues. We notice too in writers on the spiritual life, that they reduce all their teaching to certain fundamental points, from which as from so many sources they derive them, thus some base everything upon knowledge of oneself, others on imitation of Christ, others on the presence of God, others on the use of prayer and contemplation, others on resignation or conformity to the will of God, others

again on other matters. These things then let each one examine in his own case, and find out what abundance of lights he receives with regard to them, and reflect what use he makes of them for his own profit and advancement.

2. Let him see what vices he either especially hates, or judges should be thus hated, and puts before others as things to be hated and avoided, for this is usually the result of and is attended by some special illumination. Thus some are wont to particularly denounce and persuade men to avoid gluttony, others deal thus with impurity, others talkativeness, others a habit of suspicion, others self-love, others pride, others vain-glory, others tepidity, others a burying or concealing of the heart, others particular friendships, others other vices, fewer or more numerous as the case may be, and with regard to them they are ever receiving fresh light, and finding out new and efficacious methods of putting them before others, and urging them on their attention. Here then he who is examining himself will see in what way he himself avoids these and the like vices, and how far he keeps himself away from them not

only in his way of speaking of them, but also in his manner of life.

3. Let him see which virtues he specially loves, of which he specially makes account, and regards as the principal ones, or in which it is that he most desires that both he himself and others should excel, which does he put before others with efficacy and with pleasure in so doing, or which are those that he requires others to practise. And at the same time let him see how far he himself makes progress and excels in them, how he exercises himself in them, and why he is negligent in this respect.

4. Let him consider those good habits and exercises which either formerly or lately he took note of, valued, and practised, and also those he still practises, by means of which he remembers that he has much advanced both himself and others in the spiritual life, and in which he knows that much efficacy resides—those in fact that he is wont to set before others to their profit and enlightenment. Such exercises are with some fewer, with others more numerous, with some of one kind, with others of another, the degree of light given therewith differing throughout. Thus, for example, some

are advanced in spirituality by and take pleasure in the love of the will of God, and in conforming, betrothing, and resigning themselves thereto; others take pleasure in sweetly meeting with God's Providence, even in the smallest things, and in its over-ruling all things for good; others in tasting, loving, and contemplating the Eternal Wisdom, and desiring with Solomon to take It to themselves as their spouse. Others can never be satiated with thinking of and loving God's charity, goodness, and mercy. Others are moved by a reverential sense of the Divine Presence. Others are struck more than anything else by the Dignity and Supreme Excellence of God, and prefer to all else to devote themselves to honouring it in all things. Others desire to fulfil in all things God's good pleasure. Others, in the place of all other maxims, have that of doing all for the greater glory of God. Others, like infants, cling to Grace "that nourisheth all,"* as the Wise Man says. Others are seized by the thought of the Incarnation and the love of the Incarnate Wisdom of God, and of these, different men are more moved by

* Wis. xvi. 25.

this or that different mystery of His life, deeds, sufferings, and teachings. Others pour themselves out in love and service to the Most Blessed Mother of God and men—giving her the service of a slave, the love of a son, an heir, a spouse. Others are wonderfully drawn to devotion to all the Saints, or to certain orders or individuals among them. Others strive to excel in acts of mercy to the souls in Purgatory. Others desire to be the veriest slaves of their Order and of their brethren, and in this endeavour to practise and perfect themselves in the spiritual life. Others are given to a life of self-examination, and to examens and times of recollection—monthly, weekly, daily, hourly, or even more frequently, and in this way they make progress and advise such to others as a means of advancement. Some desire to give themselves chiefly to the precise observance of the order of the day and exact performance of their ordinary actions, even of the least important, that is to say, to let all their acts be common ones, but to do nothing in a common or imperfect way, and they give this advice to others. Some love to follow closely community life. Others to possess

nothing but what is absolutely necessary. Others take delight in the practice of recollection and self-command. Others consider it a great help to perfection to act with premeditation, and election definitely made by the will. Others seek in all things to know and depreciate themselves. Others love and desire to be admonished, reprehended, blamed, and taken for fools. Others put their honour and reputation at the disposal of all men, making thus of it a holocaust to God. Others are guided by meditation on death, or rather by a vivid anticipation of it. Others make great account of the contempt of human respect, of praise, or blame, and of the words and judgments of men. Others dwell upon those words of St. Augustine—"O to love—to go away—to die to oneself, and to attain to God!" * Others set especial value on loving truth and obeying reason. Others upon the practice of uniting one's own merits to those of Christ and His saints. Others on the love of our enemies and the hearty forgiveness of injuries. Others on observing, seizing upon, and practising the

* "O amare! O ire! O sibi perire et ad Deum pervenire."

inspirations they receive. Others diligently commend devotion to and veneration of the Most Holy Sacrament. Others desire to live a spotless life before God without incurring any guilt or punishment. Others are entirely given to self-chastisement, both interior and exterior, and to the love and desire of the cross in every form. It is a custom with others to daily cleanse their souls in the Blood of Christ as in the laver of God's justice. Some are wholly given to acts of reparation for their own daily defects and those of all men; others to the spirit of humbly begging everything from God; others to gratitude and acts of thanksgiving, others to the esteem and veneration of their vocation in religion. In fine different men are (so to say) influenced by different spirits, and attracted by different exercises, and these in less or greater number in each case, as Divine Grace communicates itself to them, and they on their part make themselves fit and capable of receiving it. The spiritual man will therefore examine himself on these or some of these heads, and see whether he has received the grace of God in vain? Whether while teaching others he has

taught himself? Whether the acts of his will have corresponded to his knowledge? Whether he has acted as well as spoken? Whether he has first himself done what he was to teach to others? Whether he has not become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal,* and while he preached to others has himself become a castaway.†

The Fourth Point will include efficacious acts of sorrow and shame, and a piercing fear of the Divine judgments, when God will demand back with profit and interest the talents and goods He has entrusted to us. Wonderful indeed should be the confusion of those who, though they are perhaps for others efficient and careful Masters of the spiritual life, and successful directors and guides, and are acting in their requirements with their spiritual sons and disciples as to their advancement in spirituality and perfection, nevertheless even in this world are found to be themselves, on account of their own idleness, tepidity, and other obvious causes, far inferior in the spiritual life to those they direct, far below them, I say, in sanctifying grace, in merits, and in the glory

* 1 Cor. xiii. 1. † 1 Cor. ix. 27.

they have earned. And I think that the consideration of this motive of fear is necessary for more than one Spiritual Father and director, and would be of the greatest advantage to them if they would but make use of it, and would ponder in their minds the saying:—"Strangers have devoured his strength and he knew it not."*

The Fifth Point will include a firm, efficacious and determined resolution of real amendment, of seeking after holiness, and reducing to practice those lights that are granted to us. It will also include an earnest prayer to God that He may give us grace to do, as well as grace to know, so that we may not perform less than we know that we ought to do; nay more, that He may grant us to have knowledge only of that which it is our duty to do under the penalty of some defect on our part. For this seems to be the meaning of that petition of the Wise Man: "O Lord, give me neither beggary or riches, give me only the necessaries of life,"† and "give me not haughtiness of my eyes, and turn away from me all desire"‡ (that

* Osee vii. 9. † Prov. xxx. 8.
‡ Eccles. xxiii. 5.

is useless and barren desires); and of those words of the Apostle: "Knowledge puffeth up but charity edifieth,"* for truly knowledge, if it be only knowledge, puffs a man up by giving a handle to pride. And the same is the meaning of those words: "He that addeth knowledge, addeth also labour,"† for he who knows what he ought to do and does it not, makes his punishment the greater, and in the same degree makes his fault the more inexcusable, and his eternal ruin and damnation more certain. Therefore we should pray to God that we may know what we ought to do, and do that which we know, and that we may deserve to obtain that blessing of Christ: "If you know these things you shall be blessed if you do them."‡

* 1 Cor. viii. 1. † Eccl. i. 18.
‡ St. John xiii. 17.

FIFTEENTH METHOD.

THAT WE SHOULD LIVE FROM HOUR TO HOUR, AND HOW TO MAKE THIS HOURLY EXAMEN.

That most saintly Brother of our society, the Blessed John Berchmans, amongst his notes on ascetical subjects and the resolutions he determined he should observe, all which are very remarkable and full of spiritual wisdom, has this one: "I will live from day to day and from hour to hour, without being in anything solicitous as to the morrow." And though in the common sense in which men take it this maxim or resolution can be, and often is, degraded to the level of those who are the slaves of drink, whose God is their belly, who are mere animals and relish only the things of earth, who think nothing of eternity, but live from day to day with this saying in their mouths: "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die," yet in its sounder sense it is

very much used among spiritual men who find it very profitable and highly value it. Thus a certain holy man being asked how any one could manage quickly to become a saint replied: "If you will only think that you are going to die each day." Another being asked how one might succeed in doing all one's actions well, replied: "If you will persuade yourself that the action you are doing is your last." Perhaps Blessed John, who was of the same opinion, was thinking of this reply when in another series of resolutions he noted this: "To do all things as if they were my last;" and moreover in another place: "You know not but that this action may be your last, do it therefore as you would wish to do your last act." And again elsewhere he makes this resolution: "I will live from day to day and from hour to hour without solicitude as to what may happen in the future, committing all that concerns me to the Providence of God and to my Superiors." Finally he adds in another place: "What I can do in the present hour I will never put off to another time." From all this it is easy to see how much account he made of this maxim of living from hour to hour. But it would seem, if

we look into the matter, that even Christ our Lord Himself made use of this way of living from hour to hour, for in His discourses we often meet with such expressions as these: "My hour is not yet come—Father My hour is come—And for this cause I came unto this hour. My time is not yet come—Be not solicitous for to-morrow—Jesus knowing that His hour was come," &c. St. John the Evangelist too seems to have had this practice, nay he seems to recommend us to begin each hour as if it were the last, for he repeatedly said: "Little children, it is the last hour." This too may be remarked of St. James and St. Paul. It is indeed very useful for our fervour and advancement in spiritual things to set before us at all times the end of life as near, and to do everything as if it were our last act, that is to omit in doing it nothing that can make it perfect. The Saints made use of various practices with this object. For some to attain it used to repeat to themselves: "Bernard, for what have you come hither?" "Arsenius, for what have you come hither?" Others had the maxim: *Age quod agis*—"Do what you are doing;" others "What thou doest do quickly;" others

"Whatever your hand can do, do at once, for among the dead to whom you are hastening there is no room for methods and plans of action." Others not only thought that each day they were to die, but spoke of themselves as dying men. Others feared to say: "I will do such a thing to-morrow," or, "I will go to such a place to-morrow," and used to wonder at those who spoke in this way and promised themselves so long a time. Others were careful to adopt themselves and recommend to others the practice of dying in spirit four-and-twenty times a day, that they might thus abundantly fulfil the words of the Apostle, "I die daily." Others used to say to themselves and to others, "You must lead a dying life." Others devoted themselves to the practice of every hour renewing their intention. Others hourly demanded of themselves an account of their life and deeds, a practice which we are told was familiar to our Holy Father St. Ignatius. Others (to put an end to this enumeration), each hour aroused themselves to fervour by these or similar words: "I have said, now have I begun," and resolved to do all their actions most perfectly, adding thereto and

eliciting the conditions necessary for perfect acts.

This then is the object of the present exercise. It lays down a method of performing as perfectly as possible either the actions of each hour or individual acts, and prescribes those points which should be kept in view in our actions in order that they may be perfect. It attains both these ends by means of a certain exercise, namely, by showing how to make an Examen each hour, or at least after such of our actions as are more important, or remarkable, or occupy us for some length of time. The method adopted may be as follows :—

The First and Second Points will consist of a brief act of thanksgiving and a prayer for light, *e.g.*, in these words—"Blessed be my Lord and my God from henceforth, now, and for ever. O most blessed Light fill the depths of my heart."*

The Third Point will consist of an examination of the hour that is just past, or the work that is just finished. 1. Was the work in itself a good one? 2. Was it well done? And as this is a very wide question we must know that certain

* "Benedictus Dominus Deus meus ex hoc, nunc et in sæculum. O Lux beatissima, reple cordis intima."

points are necessary for our actions to be simply good, others again for them to be merely better, or good and perfect in a better and higher degree, or again absolutely perfect. For them to be simply good (1) they should be either good by their own nature, or at least by nature indifferent, but directed to an end that is good in itself, (2) they should be done by one who is in a state of grace, or at least disposing himself for that state, (3) they should be free and voluntary acts, the result of deliberate choice, (4) they should be directed to an end that is not only good but also supernaturally good, that is known to us by the Divine faith; under this head too we include purity of intention, (5) their surroundings and details should be good, so that they may not be vitiated by any of these, for it is written: That which is just do justly; and again: Hast thou not sinned if thou dost make the right offering, but dost not rightly apportion it? In this Examen, therefore, we must consider these points, and directing the Examen to them, ask ourselves if they are to be found in our actions? and if not, why so?

But if our actions are to be better, or perfect

in a high degree, they should have those characteristics which according to each one's judgment should form a part of their goodness and holiness. In making this judgment we should be guided by the will of God, the examples of Christ and His Saints, the inward unction of grace and the advice and approbation of experienced spiritual directors. The points to be looked to are:—1. As pure and unalloyed an intention as we can possibly have, aiming only at what will be pleasing to God, that is His glory and His will, His wishes and good pleasure, and the honour and the exaltation that most fully befits Him. 2. An earnest actual union with and application of the merits of Christ to our works. 3. A putting aside of all regard for what bears upon our own interest, even though it be in what is spiritual and eternal. 4. An imitation of Christ, so as to show Him forth as much as possible in our works. 5. A brave, prompt, joyous and unfaltering acceptance of whatever suffering or humiliation may come upon us from our act or from the occasion of it, and this even though what we have to bear be grievous and intense, and known to hardly any one else. 6. The virtue assigned

for the month should be practised in our act or in the occasion of it. 7. There should be a scrupulous and literal observance of our rule, or of obedience, or of the dictates of prudence and of our own private resolutions. In the Examen we should look to these and the like points and see how far they are to be found in our actions.

But further if our actions are to be of a still more complete and excellent perfection and beauty they should have these qualities. 1. That they should be done not only in charity, on account of charity and out of charity, but on account of and out of a sublime degree of charity. 2. And in the spirit of sacrifice. 3. That they should be done in union with the good desires of all creatures, of all the saints, of all the angels, of the Most Blessed Mother of God, of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ, and even of the Most Holy Trinity itself. 4. That not the main actions themselves, but moreover all subsidiary acts connected with them (that is to say the employment of our faculties, of creatures and of the various accompaniments of our actions and all that co-operates in effecting

them) should be in the same way as the actions themselves, made perfect and offered up to please God. 5. That God's will and pleasure should be sought in every particular of the act, of the faculties by which we produce it, and of the creatures and surrounding circumstances that co-operate in it, and that all else that can perfect and elevate the act should be developed therein, and this in every point with greater and greater fervour ever increasing even to a thousandfold; nay more, desiring to raise it to the highest point that is at all possible to us, so as to be most worthy of the supreme worthiness of God, so far as man can give him honour, and God can receive it from man. 6. Desiring in the same way that in every particular of the action man himself should be humbled, more and more even to a thousandfold, in a word as far as man can be humbled, or God of Himself or through creatures can humble him, and this with perfect disinterestedness, without any regard for our own advantage, seeking only that by reason of and according to the will of God such honour as He deserves should be given to Him, and that man should be humbled, abased, and as

it were annihilated, according as he merits all this. In making this Examen of the past hour, or of single actions, we are to see if we have thus acted or brought to our acts such dispositions, or if we have committed the contrary faults, or allowed what would vitiate our works to be found in them.

The Fourth Point will consist of an act of sorrow for the negligences we have discovered.

The Fifth Point will consist of a purpose of amendment.

Although after it has been a little while in use this Examen will not take up much time, it may be reduced even to fewer heads according to choice. Or a few may be taken at first and then one may gradually go on to add more and more of them. There can be no doubt that the use of this exercise, that is this hourly diligence, this habitual practice of living from hour to hour and doing all our works as if they were the last acts of our last hour, is highly efficacious and well calculated to increase the perfection of the soul, so that we do not weary in the good work, but abound the more therein. For the labour indeed is of an hour, but the reward a happy eternity.

SIXTEENTH METHOD.

IN WHICH ARE SET FORTH VARIOUS KINDS OF EXAMENS, USEFUL FOR OUR ADVANCEMENT, WHICH MAY BE MADE AFTER THE MANNER OF THE FOREGOING.

I propose to include in the present chapter a simple enumeration of various Examens, which if he will practise himself in them, may be of great advantage to him who traffics in spiritual things, assisting him to an advance in virtue, and to avoid many defects in his daily life. Such are:—

Examen I.—On the disposal of our time and the order of our daily actions. In this one should see how he has spent in an orderly way all his hours from the time of rising to that of retiring to rest (and I presume that an order is assigned to them all either by the community or by himself), and how he has employed them in the occupations assigned to him. If he finds that he has been guilty of any negligence,

he should not let it go unpunished. Let him then make a resolution of amendment, and remove the cause of the disorder.

Examen II.—On the special office with which one is charged, *e.g.*, Superior, preacher, professor, student, door-keeper, cook, &c. In this one should see if he has discharged and completely fulfilled all the duties of his office according to the rules assigned to it, and the dictates of prudence, observing also his own private resolutions and good practices relating to it, and as far as may be keeping to the literal sense of his Rule. And then as before he will excite himself to detestation of his negligence, make a resolution of amendment, expiate his fault by some penance, make some compensation for it, and remove the causes of his carelessness.

Examen III.—On the resolutions made in the annual retreat, or the half-yearly or monthly time of recollection, or in daily meditation, or on any other occasion whatsoever. In this Examen all our resolutions are to be reviewed, and we are to see if we have kept them, and why we have not done so.

Examen IV.—On all our acts of various vir-

tues and of interior and exterior mortification. Have they been practised as frequently as we had resolved, and this with diligence and fruit, or carelessly and hurriedly? and why so? or have they been altogether omitted. Then in the same way we should atone for our defects and negligences by sorrow, penance, amendment, and removal of the obstacles that stand in our way. This kind of Examen may be used in connection with the Particular Examen, and it even may or ought to supply the matter of it.

Examen V.—On the Rules, customs of the community, and our own practices and resolutions in so far as all these bear upon some action of more or less importance (an Examen very closely corresponding with that given in the preceding chapter). For example, taking our practices to be observed as to rising, meditation, study, hearing or saying Mass, confession, Communion, meals, saying Office, we may usefully ask ourselves, have we observed them all? and in what manner? or why have we neglected them? and then expiate our negligence as it deserves by penance, sorrow, and purpose of amendment.

Examen VI.—On things that are to be done, that is on those which we are to do this day, or in the coming hour, using our foresight and also resolving what we are to do, in what way, in what order, and with what care and perfection. One can hardly believe how profitable for our advancement is such a forecast. It is indeed the mother of all good: just as the neglect of it (which is very common even among those who are earnestly desirous of perfection) is a source of all kinds of defects, and shows a want of prudence and even a contempt of it, whence it comes that innumerable aspirants to perfection either reach it with great difficulty and very slowly, or never attain to it at all. We are wont, it is true, to correct our errors by examinations made after our acts and deeds have been done; but it would indeed be much better to correct them by examination beforehand. For it is more prudent and advantageous to take care beforehand that we do not incur hurt or loss, than after we have perhaps suffered such injuries to bring a fitting remedy to bear upon them. A subsequent examination amends and corrects the faults we have committed, but also has to provide against their being com-

mitted again in future. But an examination made beforehand on what we have to do provides against their being committed at all, and any one can see that this is much better. Great value should therefore be set upon this method of self-examination and on the practice of it, and a spiritual man should always give some time to it every day, and this not once, but at least twice, namely in the morning and about noon. But it is to be wished that it should precede every action of greater importance, so that before the act we should see how we were to do it, and after the act make another Examen as to how it had been done.*

Examen VII.—On things that may happen to us. This is very like the last Examen, but differs from it inasmuch as the last provided for things we are to do, and that we know and are accustomed to, but this provides for occurrences that are unknown to us, and, as far as oneself is concerned, accidental, unforeseen, or at least unexpected. We therefore call it an Examen on things that may happen to us; because they occur without our having thought

* For a development of these methods see the next chapter.

of them, and yet we can foresee them, at least in this sense that though we cannot foretell them, yet the mind can arm itself against such occurrences, conjecturing from what has happened in the past, that the same things or some others like them will occur even this very day. In this way we may provide for some business, although we do not know that it will fall in our way, for we know nevertheless that it may come before us, and that it sometimes does. So also we may foresee that we may have to deal with some one, or that some trouble or difficulty may come upon us, from within or from without, from this or that person, occasion or circumstance, &c. It is very useful to forecast and dwell upon such possibilities, for it is of advantage in many ways, and amongst others it prepares the mind to preserve its inward peace, to conquer temptations, and to prevent these and suchlike sudden influences from surprising us without giving us time to use our reason, and so forth. Wherefore if it is given to any one thus to foresee what he will have to do and what will occur to him, he should count it among the greatest of God's favours; for such a man is

always in a secure harbour, he is sailing in smooth water, and is hardly ever tossed about or disturbed by a tempest; he has always command of himself and always belongs to God. Therefore those who aspire to and seek after advancement in the spiritual life should greatly value this kind of exercise and examination.

Examen VIII.—On Repugnances and Difficulties. I give this name to this exercise because its object is to examine those repugnances we daily feel within ourselves on various occasions that occur every day, when we shrink from what we should desire, and desire what we should shrink from; or although reason, conscience, obedience, and charity point out the way to us, our own feelings or our perverse will, or some habit or rebellious passion struggle against it. It is well to overcome such a repugnance, and as soon as we have won the victory make use of this method of examination upon it.

1. The usual act of thanksgiving is to be made. 2. We are to ask for light. 3. We are to go over our actions in the time just past, in order to see in each one what undue repug-

nance and reluctance we experienced in ourselves; whether we yielded or succumbed to it? was it under the pretext that we could make up for it some other time? or was it through any human respect or affection, or through frailty or self-indulgence, or excusing ourselves on the plea that there was no strict obligation under the penalty of guilt or sin, &c.

Or did we resist it? how earnestly? from what motive? was it at once? or with some delay, debating and discussing with ourselves, and inclining to yield? have we ourselves been in any way the cause of this repugnance? did it last long, or has it occurred frequently, or is it of long standing in us? and has it acquired this hold on us through our own slothfulness?

For the purpose of making this Examen it will be well to have written down and at hand a short memorandum of those points in which we usually feel reluctance, so that we may here go over them; for, as experience shows, everyone, no matter how holy, fervent, and perfect he may be, has every day certain points to which he feels a repugnance in his daily occupations,

and in these he finds that he comes off now better now worse, that he is now more, now less subject to them, now more inclined to yield, now stronger, now weaker, and this often happens even in the most trifling things.

4. Having in this way reviewed our actions, and the feelings of repugnance we experienced during them, we must, as often and as far as we find ourselves in fault, atone for these faults by exciting ourselves to sorrow, detestation, and shame at the sight of them, by confessing them, by giving some time to a firm and serious purpose of amendment, and by doing penance for them by doing or suffering something contrary thereto.

5. Then we should at least carefully weigh the motives that urge us to conquer ourselves and to rid ourselves of these feelings of repugnance such as: 1. That God does not wish us to yield to them, and is grieved by our yielding, and thus failing to fulfil the good pleasure of His will. 2. That we are still engaged in or even misled by conflicts fit only for boys, and yet in the opinion of men we are perhaps regarded as tried and veteran soldiers, and great masters of the spirit, and even we our-

selves wonder that even beginners should long struggle with such difficulties, and are wont to think this wretched and unworthy of men. 3. That it is base and foolish to allow our good works and resolutions and our common duties to be stained with such blemishes, for such stains are an obstacle to our appearing with our good works in the sight of God. 4. To these motives we may add the pains of Purgatory, the penalty of which we infallibly incur in this way. 5. In the same way we may consider the enjoyment and exultation at our expense which our enemies the devils derive from such delusions on our part, as they see us every day stumbling over these trifles, and they say, "It is well, it is well, we have swallowed him up." * 6. The unfounded judgments of many who all the more because they do not now believe that we fall in this way, will marvel when to our shame they learn in the Day of Judgment that we have thus fallen. 7. The thought that many who have not been so long engaged in the spiritual life, who know less of the science of religious perfection, and do not make so high a profession of practising

* Ps. xxxiv. 25.

virtue, as for instance our spiritual children, do not yield in this way, nay, under our advice, direction, and teaching, are not even disturbed by such things. To be thus surpassed cannot but be unworthy of us, and disgraceful and shameful for us.

The soul cannot fail to be moved to bravely shake off all this reluctance, if it will but weigh these and the like motives in the light that God gives it.

SEVENTEENTH METHOD.

AN EXAMEN ON THINGS WE HAVE TO DO, OR ON WHICH WE ARE ENGAGED.

It conduces very much to the perfection of our actions to know the nature, and the value of each work as to its perfection or imperfection before we do it, while we are engaged on it, and after it is accomplished. For this is the one great aid and support of prudence (which is the mistress of all virtues and the soul of all perfection), without which aid it cannot possibly exist, or duly perform the office that belongs to it. Now this knowledge of the nature and value of any action as to its perfection or imperfection cannot be acquired in any better or more certain way, than by the use of the Examen, the method of which, that it may be readily used, is set forth in the following exercises.

The Examen on things that we are to do will include the following points :—

1. Should this action be done? Why? For what object? What is the motive that urges us to it? Is it solely with a view to God, for a supernatural motive, and for this or that one in particular?

2. Try to foresee those things that it may give rise to, even beyond what may be usually expected, in the way of opportunities of good or evil, also the obstacles, helps, trials, you may meet with.

3. Examine, as far as may be, all the circumstances in the midst of which you will have to do, to carry on, and to complete the work.

4. Excite yourself to zeal and vigilance for performing it, tempering them with discretion.

5. Arm yourself beforehand with constancy, magnanimity, earnestness, and strength of mind.

6. Endeavour to devote yourself wholly to perfecting the work.

7. In order to conquer yourself choose those

works, means, methods, and aids that are more painful and humiliating.

8. See that you bring to the work a most earnest endeavour to attain perfection, and that in an heroic degree.

9. Elevate the work itself too by making the end you have in view, the means you take, your efforts, your fervour, and the purity of your intention in doing it more pleasing to God.

10. Examine what are the means to attain your end or accomplish the work; choose them; fix the order in which it is to be executed, and add to this rules, methods, and practices to be followed therein, and take care to make use of all opportunities of good, whether they arise from the nature of the work, or are foreseen, invited and anticipated by yourself, or come of their own accord, and from sources whence you do not expect them.

11. See to gaining the proper fruit that you desire.

12. Endeavour that the work shall be done so as to edify your neighbour.

Examen to be used on things in which we are engaged and while we are so engaged in them :—

1. See that during the progress and performance of the work you frequently place yourself before God and in His presence.

2. That you recollect yourself and restrain yourself from becoming too much engrossed and absorbed in it.

3. That you renew the intention with which you undertook the work.

4. That you look to the judgment and opinion of God, and of your conscience on the work, and on the manner of doing it.

5. If anything has been done badly, quickly be sorry for it, undo it, amend and make atonement.

6. If anything has been well done, give it all back to God.

7. Ask for God's blessing, aid, and sufficient grace to continue and complete the work, according to the measure of His good pleasure.

8. Renew your fervour in the work according to the measure in which you are capable of it, even to an heroic degree.

An Examen which may be used both before undertaking a work and while doing it.

1. Earnestly beg that the blessing and providential care of God may be with you and direct you in the work you are to do or are actually doing.

2. Ask that the eternal "Wisdom of God that sitteth by His throne"* may be with you and co-operate with you.

3. Ask of that same Wisdom to direct you in doing and bringing to completion your work, and in choosing such methods as are more pleasing to God.

4. Ask of the same confidently, not out of mere curiosity, but with humility and resignation, light to foresee something of what will occur to you in the course of it.

5. Having thus implored the aid of the Divine Will and Wisdom, and having conceived a lively hope of the blessing, guidance, and protection of God, confide to God alone the progress and the successful completion of the affair.

* Wisdom ix. 4.

An Examen to be used when the work is accomplished.

1. Cast yourself upon the Providence of God, as if upon the bosom of a mother, and there as it were breathe again, weary as you are, and rest in security.

2. Humbly set before God the toil you have given to your work, and together with the work offer it to Him at His feet.

3. Lay without any reserve at the feet of God, together with yourself, all your being, action, capacity, efforts, exertions, aims, objects, powers, activity, whether in the natural or supernatural order, the condition you are in, the graces you have received, your fervour in its various degrees, your previous merits, as well as those you have acquired by this last work, the fruits of it, and all that belongs to you with others, that is to say in their minds, such as the fame and human praise they may give you, their favour, approbation, affection, anticipations, their opinions, expressed in conversation, applause, discussions, the pleasure you may give them, in a word, whatever created thing may fall to your

lot, and all that concerns you; and abase yourself, acknowledging your own nothingness, placing before your eyes and reserving for yourself only your own incapacity, wickedness, and guilt, and the debt of punishment you have incurred, and giving all to God and thanking Him for all. Thus leave with Him all you have laid before Him, and keep only yourself in your nakedness, covered only with your nothingness.

EIGHTEENTH METHOD.

A MEANS OF MAKING USE OF THE FOREGOING EXAMENS, WHICH IS AT THE SAME TIME A COMPENDIUM OF NEARLY ALL OF THEM.

Some who desire to make use of the foregoing Examens will experience no slight difficulty on this account, that amid such a variety of methods, which include in themselves such a multitude of details, it is not easy to find a means of using them with profit. The present method offers a two-fold remedy for this disadvantage.

For in the first place, with a view to diminishing the aforesaid difficulty, it will be well for him who traffics in spiritual things to set apart certain times either in the day, in the week, or even in the month, in which to decide on using such of the preceding Examens as each one's disposition may require. For there are some which there is

no need of using every day, but, as we will, we may take up now this, now that kind of Examen. Such is the Examen which the first method sets forth, after the manner of our holy Father St. Ignatius. Such is that which is made in union with the Five Wounds. Such are those in which one judges oneself in the presence of God, or acts as judge in the place of God. And there are some which may be advantageously made use of every day, if a fixed and convenient time can be assigned to them. Such are the method of compensation, the Examen on the sources of our defects, the Examen on renewal of fervour, the Examen on our opportunities of practising virtue, the Examen to excite gratitude, and the act of censorship. There are also some which may be used every month or every week, as each one pleases; finally, there are some adapted for use each hour. But these same can nevertheless be used without any difficulty, but not without advantage at other times, and this is the first means of meeting the aforesaid difficulty in the use of these Examens. The other means is, that if any one should find it hard thus to assign and recollect certain times

for these Examens, he should make use of the following Examen, in which, as in a compendium, nearly all that is contained in the foregoing methods is included. It is divided into two principal heads—one embraces those things which a spiritual man should avoid in the occupations of his daily life, the other those which he should perform and keep in view.

A method of Examen to be made as to those things which a spiritual man should avoid in his daily life.

Points I. and II., as usual.

Point III. will embrace the following heads:

1.—*In relation to God.*

1. In defect of intention—in that either you did not make one, or that, as it involved a consideration of your own interest, was not pure, or it was made some time back, and consequently has become cold and of little or no force, nay perhaps it has been neutralized or vitiated by the intervention of some more recent and lower intention.

2. Disregard and forgetfulness of the presence of God, neglecting to place yourself in His sight, or living and acting before Him in a way that is irreverent and unworthy to be seen by Him.

3. A half-concealed regard for the great merit of our works before God. This merit we are to resign before God henceforth and for ever, desiring to merit nothing from Him, but inasmuch as and in such manner as He wishes, and looking only to Him and to His will and pleasure.

4. A wish to avoid shame, whence comes concealment from our Superiors and others of those defects of which we are ashamed, and this even in concealment.

5. Carping at and complaining of defects whether in ourselves or others.

6. Disregarding the grace of God when it is urging us to do virtuous actions, and to do them well, or to avoid imperfections. Also when they are enlightening our intellect and inflaming our will, repelling such graces, or delaying to act upon them, and so rejecting them, and this either from the weakness of a timid heart, or through regard for human

respect, or to avoid some inconvenience from without, or from inordinate affection to something lower, or the desire of an easier life, or because what grace here suggests is not of obligation.

7. A readiness to give up our good resolutions, but more especially and chiefly those that we form on impressions received as though by intuition, for these are often better than all that come later, and have in them something of the light of the Divine Wisdom, therefore it is not well to give them up or change them lightly.

2.—*In relation to ourselves.*

1. A chilling of devotion and fervour through neglecting the proper order of time in our actions, through hurrying, pouring out our mind upon them, and being careless of recollection.

2. Neglect of foresight as to what we have to do, or what may occur to us, whence it comes that things we have not foreseen rush in unexpectedly upon us, and even disturb and carry us away.

3. Shrinking from toil, exertion, and morti-

fication involved in some work proposed to us, though right reason would tell us to undertake it.

4. Languor of mind and effeminacy, by reason of which we omit either some interior exercise or external mortification, or useful work, through having an exaggerated idea that our bodily strength is insufficient, or through fear of the blame or jeers of others.

5. Self-seeking and self-interest, half-hidden, yet staining the mind, diminishing the purity of our intention, and inclining us to an over-tenderness and indulgence towards ourselves.

6. Inconstancy in our good resolutions, and in our good practices at certain times or in certain actions, or in the solemnities of the Church, or on days chosen by ourselves, each month or year, and this for slight matters that we might defer or wholly avoid, if only our will were really in earnest.

7. Putting off from hour to hour and from day to day, what it would be well to do at once.

8. Undertaking and doing things to which our state and some resolution obliges us, but doing this with no other end or result in view

than to still the clamorous voice of conscience, and to avoid having to confess a fault and inflict punishment for it.

9. Defects in the matter of silence, not only with others, but also when we are alone, as when we are carried away by vexation at something not succeeding or going against us, or when we speak of those who are absent as though we had them before us, censuring them, or making replies, accusations, excuses, &c.

10. Faults against perfect resignation by thinking of future things as about to happen to ourselves or to others, though perhaps they will never come to pass.

11. Breaking out into blame of the words or deeds of others, or what we see in them, or hear of them from some one else.

12. Not avoiding those occasions (especially if certain persons, times, places, affairs, circumstances are concerned in them), in which I know by experience I have more frequently fallen and am apt to fall, or am wont to leave myself unrestrained in examining the capacity, acts, words, plans and manners of others, putting little check on the tongue, and blaming them, and this too with a vindictive feeling,

or at least bearing in mind some offence received from them.

13. A hidden longing to know what others think of us, and of our affairs, our words and writings, our habits, the duties in which we are engaged and the way we discharge them. Also being too much elated or dejected and saddened at what they say or think in the one way or the other, especially at the reports made of us to superiors.

14. Too much solicitude about performing our duties and employments as well as possible, or at least about giving others the opinion that we thus perform them ; and all this not through regard for God's glory, or our own perfection and salvation, or the good name of our neighbour and of the whole community to which we belong, but merely not to lose our own individual reputation.

15. Justifying ourselves in our own minds by saying to ourselves, that such or such a defect is not really a defect, that it is only a reasonable way of acting, or that some one else was the cause of it, or that it does not actually violate any rule or obligation.

16. Being disturbed and irritated, if our

plans turn out differently from what we intended, even though this be the result of better advice than ours being taken, or of their being directed to some better object.

17. A stubborn clinging to our own arrangements and plans, so that if any obstacle is put in the way of them and forces us to change, give up, delay, alter or interrupt them, we become angry, offend against fraternal charity, meet others with a sour look, and by word, or gesture, or even in our thoughts, set them down as annoying and indiscreet, and thus send them away distressed and saddened.

18. Leaving ourselves short of time by not observing the proper distribution of it in our actions, or spending it in some useless occupation, or delaying too long over something, and as a result of this omitting, or hurrying, and as it were rushing headlong through what we have to do, or doing it in a negligent, inefficient, and confused way. Or on the other hand doing things before their proper time, or hurriedly getting through them, from an unfounded fear that there will not be time enough, or completing them too rapidly to the neglect of our accustomed methods.

19. Trouble of mind from apprehensions, or turning over and over sorrows, injuries, difficulties, annoyances, either in the present or in the past, or from presentiments as to the future; whence arise melancholy, vindictive desires, disputes in our own minds, or even with others to whom we impart our thoughts, and who are as embittered by them as we are. Hence too we make conditional resolutions that are not over wise, purposes and plans for the future, excuses to be used in some case we think we foresee; and we prepare replies and arguments, imagine this or that outcome of our affairs, the only result of all this being sadness, depression of spirits, and so forth.

3. *In relation to others.*

1. Using human motives that excite us to hope or fear, to delay or dissimulation, or cause us to be ashamed.

2. In what we do or omit, making ourselves the slaves of another's whims, pleasure, fears, hopes, or convenience, and this not for the sake of God.

3. Flattering another in his fault, and hiding or defending it with him.

4. Being the occasion of another sinning or having sinned through the hope of gaining our favour, or the expectation of being protected by us, instead of fearing reproof and punishment.

4. *With regard to this Examen.*

1. Have we avoided the above and why not?

2. Have we at fixed times examined ourselves upon these points?

3. What means have we neglected to employ, that we might have used?

4. What means can and will we employ for the future?

5. Mark out the methods to be used, their order, times, succession, and occasions.

6. Bewail and atone for past negligence.

7. Resolve to amend, and ask of God grace to do so, through the merits of Christ, of His most Blessed Mother, and of the Saints.

A Method of Examen as to those things which a Spiritual Man should aim at and perform in his daily life.

Points I. and II. as usual.

Point III. will embrace the following heads.

1. *In relation to God.*

1. Fidelity and sincerity in doing in a manner worthy of God the things of God, with Him and for Him, and with this a following of God, so that in nothing do we seek or ever will seek ourselves, even by any hidden, indirect, or veiled regard for our own self-interests, whether as to soul or body, or our own independence, liberty, reputation, or comfort.

2. Do we devote our hearts and all their affections to God alone, and cherish a dislike for all creatures?

3. Do we acknowledge the dominion of God over us, His natural dominion, His supernatural, existing in the present order of things, demanding our obedience; and what we should give to God of our own free will, by right of purchase, by reason of His supreme eminence, and His claims on us from His dignity; and having this knowledge of God do we always humbly submit ourselves entirely to Him?

4. We should examine very carefully if we have always maintained a proper reverence for God in dealing with Him and in His presence;

and if we have done devoutly the things of God, and what relates to His worship and service, and the fulfilment of His will.

5. Whether and how often we turn to God and unite ourselves to Him amid our occupations and conversation with our neighbours, and resign ourselves to the will of God, with a pure intention that has considered every aspect of all around us and is prepared for all things?

6. How far do we repose in God's special dispositions in our regard, and how far do our thoughts strive against them or relish and accept them? Can we say with David—"I opened not my mouth *because Thou hast done it;*"* or with Christ our Lord—"Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight."†

7. How far do we and will we act generously with God, and with others for His sake, being mindful of God's generosity to us.

8. What has been our vigilance in regard to the intimations of the Divine will, where we may presume what God requires of us from the lights we receive, our rules, and the commands and admonitions of our superiors?

* Ps. xxxviii. 10. † St. Matt. xi. 26.

9. Do we follow the narrow way of the Cross (rather than the wide way of sensuality and licence), and always tread the path of the Incarnate Word in His humiliations, sweetly and freely seeking it out and choosing it?

10. How prompt we are in accepting for God's sake every evil that may befall us from whatever cause, person, affair, occasion or circumstance?

11. What is our avidity for prayer, our determination, constancy and frequency in making use of it? How far do we give all things to God and share them with Him? How far do we mistrust ourselves and hope with certainty for the help of God?

2. *In relation to ourselves.*

1. Do we watch assiduously over our own nature and try to raise it to higher things?

2. Do we conquer the difficulties we meet with in our occupations, from whatever source they may arise, whether from our own nature, or some individual, or some matter or circumstances?

3. Whether we seek out and make use of opportunities of conquering ourselves even in

the smallest things in which we feel repugnance, sloth, reluctance, or desire?

4. Have we a low opinion of ourselves? Have we desired to have it? have we sought to increase it by disregarding our good qualities? Have we applied humiliating names to ourselves?

5. Have we hated our own opinion, reputation, freedom, powers?

6. Have we in all things overlooked ourselves and sought to be forgotten?

7. Have we done everything in a manner adequate to our acquired habits of grace and virtue?

8. How many and what and of what degree of heroism have our acts of virtue been during the time under consideration?

9. Have we been careful to do even the least things with exactitude? But more especially have we done our ordinary works and those of superorogation with diligence and exactitude, avoiding whatever might make them defective?

10. Have we acquired the habit of obedience in observing the order of the time assigned to the community, or that we may have imposed on ourselves, passing from one occupation to

another as soon as the hour, or the signal, or rather the voice of God calls us?

11. Have we made it a custom to supply for our defects (even when they are the result of inadvertence), by some work or penance of an opposite nature, and this in a degree beyond what the omission strictly requires?

12. Have we borne with little inconveniences and troubles of mind or body? and allowed them to continue, at least sometimes, and this of our own accord and joyfully and without speaking of it?

13. Are we careful of our time, and do we arrange it well? and do we avoid those companions, and those occupations and conversations that steal our time from us?

14. Do we begin and perform each and every one of our occupations, after previous reflection, and this in a supernatural way, making an election, raising our hearts to God and making a sacrifice of self?

15. Do we avoid saying or hearing anything about ourselves? and especially do we abstain from the self-complacent use of the word "I."

16. Do we keep the mind firmly raised above and undisturbed by the blame, talk, writings

and judgments of men, by unexpected occurrences, by what is joyful or sad, close at hand or remote, certain or doubtful, unhoped for, or promised to us, by desires and wishes, by what is hurtful to our good name, our feelings, our freedom of action, or our influence, thus keeping full command of ourselves in all our actions and whatever may be our lot?

17. Have we sought, and how often, to actually taste of poverty, shame, pain, punishment, and blame? or at least have we promptly resigned ourselves to such things, desiring to suffer more, and not complaining of them to any one even to our nearest friends?

18. Have we judged of ourselves and our concerns by the light of conscience, as we might expect to do if we were at the point of death? Have we judged ourselves as God will judge us?

3. *In relation to others.*

1. Have we recognized Christ in every superior and subordinate official, even the lowest?

2. Have we been inflamed with an active zeal for souls?

3. Have we edified others in all things?

4. How have we dealt with others in all things?

5. Have we borne with what is displeasing to us in others?

6. Have we mercifully excused the defects of others except where duty required us to act otherwise?

These and similar matters will furnish those who wish to make progress in spirituality with sufficient material for both the Particular and General Examens. Do you make use of them for the greater glory of God?

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